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MARCH 17 - 23, 2010 THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN SFBG.COM VOL. 44, NO. 24 FREE



BIG BIZ, BIG LIES

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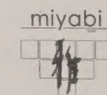
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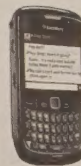
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DOGS



Harry
Harry is well known in the community and spends his free time volunteering at Under One Roof on Castro.



Shilo
Shilo is soft, fuzzy, warm, has a big smile, and spends most of his weekends playing on the beaches in Pacifica.



Stella
Full of personality and attitude, Stella never passes a good dive bar.



Emma Peel
Emma Peel likes to spend her Sundays at Dolores or Golden Gate Parks bringing smiles and licks to anyone who will accept them.



Gort
Gort cares about the environment and does his civic duty by collecting pesky plastic water bottles for proper recycling.

CATS



Ella
Ella loves performing and graduated top of her class in tricks.



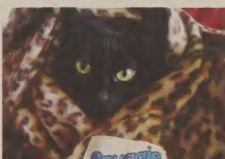
Jose
Jose is an 11 year old, metrosexual, cat of the times that enjoys warm San Francisco days.



Otter
Nine year old Otter loves sleeping in the sock drawer, but when she's awake she likes to talk.



Julia Dream
Julia Dream enjoys chasing shadows, sitting in laps, and greeting her owner at the door.



Edie
Edie, named after Edie Sedgwick, likes to line her litter box with the "other" weekly.

OTHER



Amiga
Amiga is a White Capped Pionus Parrot that likes to listen to classical music, snuggle in bed, and tell her owner, "I love you."



Lourdes
Lourdes the turtle is a gal about town and loves visiting San Francisco's parks.



Chilla
Chilla, is a five month old chinchilla who's favorite room in the house is the bathroom because it's cool and bright like the Andes



Sibyl
Sibyl is a Pionus Parrot that keeps her owner company at work and is great at house chores, like making the bed.

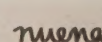


Donald
Donald the duck is seven years old and loves to snack on bananas, tomatoes, and red bell peppers.

Circle your choice for the cutest pet in each category (Dog, Cat, Other) and mail to: Cutest Pet in the Bay, c/o Guardian, 135 Mississippi, SF CA 94107 or Email the name of your choice to: promos@sfbg.com (Subject line: Cutest Pet in the Bay). All entries must in house by March 22, 2010.

SPECIAL THANKS TO EMBARKADERO, CHEENG00, & NUENA.

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3.17.10

The Municipal Transportation Agency has not had a management and performance audit since 1996. How is it that an \$800 million operation can go for 14 years without that type of evaluation?

EDITOR'S NOTES

By Tim Redmond
Tredmond@sfbg.com

For decades, the San Francisco City Charter has had a fairly simple process for filling vacancies in local elected office: the mayor makes an appointment. A supervisor leaves office, or the district attorney leaves office, or the city attorney leaves office, or the controller leaves office, or the assessor leaves office, or the public defender leaves office ... there's no election. It's up to the mayor to fill the job. It gives the person in Room 200 a tremendous amount of power.

Gavin Newsom's a beneficiary of this system — he didn't run for election the first time he took elective office. A mayor named Willie Brown appointed him to the Board of Supervisors.

If the mayor leaves office, on the other hand, the Board of Supervisors, by a majority vote, gets to fill that position. And while Newsom has never complained about any of this in the past, now that he thinks he's going to get elected lieutenant governor, he's got a campaign underway to make sure the current district-elected board doesn't get to name his successor. He wants to change the City Charter to mandate a special election if a mayor leaves office before the end of his or her term.

It's about as hypocritical and self-serving as you can imagine, although he carefully talks about "democracy" and "the voters choosing."

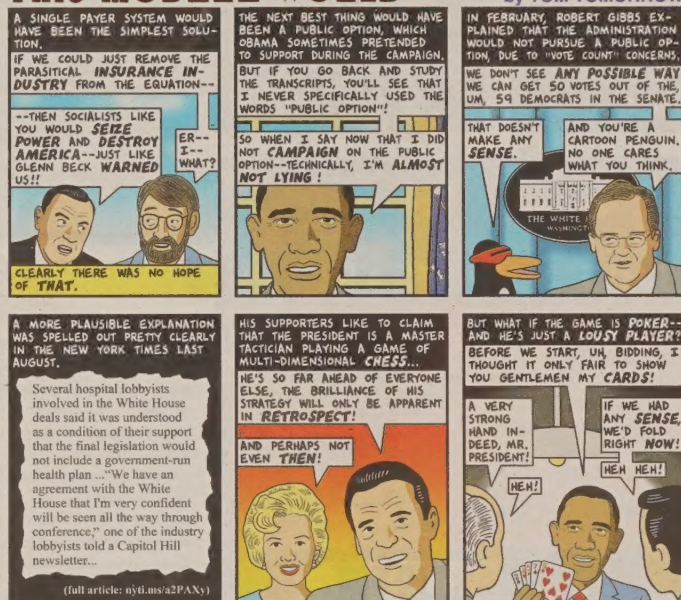
I find it kind of silly (and expensive) to plan a special election for mayor in March or April of next year when there's already a regular election for mayor in November. And special elections have notoriously low turnout (favoring candidates with money and name recognition). But let's play this out.

I've always thought it was odd that the mayor got to appoint supervisors. The governor can't

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Who wins with the Transamerica condos?

EDITORIAL As the Planning Commission prepares to vote March 18 on a pointless and overly large condominium complex next to the Transamerica Pyramid, let us take a moment to look at who would benefit from the project's approval.

The project sponsors, Aegon USA and Lowe Enterprises, would get the right to shadow public parkland, turn a city street into a private parking garage, and construct a project far beyond the allowable height for the location. They'd construct 248 luxury condos, which the city doesn't need and will do nothing for the housing crisis. The developers would also make a lot of money on the deal; that's why they want spot zoning to double the allowable height. When it comes to these sorts of projects,

taller is more profitable.

And the two companies asking for these civic favors aren't exactly San Francisco outfits that share the city's values.

Aegon is a giant insurance and finance company based in the Netherlands that bought out the local Transamerica Company in 1999. The money Aegon makes on the deal won't stay in San Francisco; even Aegon's American subsidiary doesn't have a home office here.

The company's PAC is a major contributor to Republican causes and candidates (although some Democrats get money, too, particularly the likes of Sen. Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, one of Aegon's top-dollar friends, who is among the main reasons the Senate won't pass a public option

for health insurance). And over the past 10 years, Aegon PAC has contributed \$39,500 to Lifepac, a Columbus, Ohio-based anti-abortion group.

Then there's Lowe Enterprises, based in Los Angeles. The company's chairman, Robert Lowe, and his employees were among Arnold Schwarzenegger's top donors, with a whopping \$159,500 in contributions to the Republican governor. Lowe is also a big supporter of Meg Whitman's campaign for governor, and is on her finance committee.

So here we are in Democratic San Francisco, with a mayor who will be running on a Democratic ticket for statewide office (and a mayor, by the way, who loves to talk about supporting small local business and keeping money in the local economy) preparing to give a huge financial gift to a pair out of town companies that share their wealth with right-wing Republicans.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »

Why Muni is in such trouble

By David Campos

OPINION The Municipal Transportation Agency's Web site states a goal of providing a "convenient, reliable, accessible, and safe transit system that meets the needs of all transit users" in San Francisco. I have a feeling that if you ask most Muni riders, few would use those words ("convenient," "reliable," "safe," "meeting the needs of all transit users") to describe Muni today.

Riders have been put in the untenable position of paying higher fares for less service. Yet Muni still faces a \$17 million deficit (projected to grow to \$55 million next year), which it proposes to close by again increasing fares and cutting services. When asked about Muni recently, Mayor Gavin Newsom pointed to a \$179 million reduction in state funding as the culprit. And while no one can dispute the devastating impact of such a cut, there are a few questions that suggest that the state alone is not to blame for Muni's troubles.

For one, we just learned that the MTA has not had a management and performance audit since 1996. Although it's undergone a number of fiscal audits, a management audit is different; such an audit would actually evaluate Muni's operations to determine if the system is run effectively and efficiently. How is it that an \$800 million operation can go for 14 years without that type of evaluation?

Moreover, what does it say about how Muni is managed when the agency has consistently failed to control overtime costs? We just learned that Muni accounts for about half of the city's overtime expenses. This fiscal year alone, Muni has spent \$23.8 million in

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EDITOR'S NOTES

CONT>>

appoint state legislators; the president doesn't appoint members of Congress. So if we're going to change things, let's be sure to change that, too.

And then let's take away the mayor's ability to fill any vacancy in any elected office. Leave those jobs open until the next regular election (we typically have two a year in this city anyway). Use public financing for the elections. See how that works out you, Mr. Mayor — particularly if you wind up staying in town. **SFBG**

MUNI

CONT>>

overtime, or 45.6 percent of the city's total. What kind of management and operational practices allow an agency to function like this?

And why is Muni spending 9 percent of its budget (\$67 million) on work orders (with other departments) for services that may or may not have much to do with its mission — including \$12.2 million for the Police Department, \$8.5 million for the Department of Telecommunications, and \$6.9 million for the General Services Agency that runs 311? Since a quarter of the value of these work orders would suffice to wipe away its deficit, what, if anything, has Muni done about this?

And speaking of Muni's deficit, why is it that increasing fares and reducing services seem to be the only tools in its tool box? As a number of transportation experts have suggested, there are several options that should have been on the table — raising parking fees, adding parking meters, charging for blue placards, and putting a revenue measure on the ballot, just to name a few. While some of these options may not be the answer, has Muni at least considered them? Did it consider them before proposing more fare increases and service cuts, including doubling fares for seniors, the disabled, and youth?

All this points to a more fundamental question — what about the MTA Board? Has the board provided the type of engaged and independent oversight needed to guarantee effective management? And is independent oversight even possible when all board members are appointed by one person, the mayor?

Because of these and other questions, I am proud that the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion I introduced asking the budget analyst to conduct an independent management audit of the MTA. Given the timing of the budget process, the first phase of the audit will be completed by May 1, with the remainder in the summer. The audit will evaluate key areas of Muni's operations to shed light on whether it is truly following best practices. We owe it to the ridership to face these questions head on. We no longer have the luxury to wait for the state to do the right thing. **SFBG**

SF Supervisor David Campos represents District 9.

TRANSAMERICA CONDOS

CONT>>

Of course, it's no surprise that a real estate developer would support Republican candidates — and it's no surprise an insurance company would be working against health care reform. And if the city granted or denied building permits based on the politics of the applicant, there'd be serious legal consequences (and there should be). These things ought to be decided on the merits; developers who contribute to Democrats (like the Shorenstein Company) deserve the same scrutiny as the ones who give to Republicans.

But this isn't a typical development deal. Aegon and Lowe aren't asking for a permit for a project that meets the current zoning laws. They aren't offering to build something that will create permanent jobs for local residents. They want a huge favor from San Francisco: they want the city to ignore its own planning rules, ignore its park-shadow ordinance, and hand over a piece of city street, just to make their project more profitable — and to give them more money that can go to opposing health-care reform and opposing abortion rights and electing right-wing Republicans. And they're offering the city nothing in return.

On the merits, the project richly deserves to be rejected. The only reason to approve it is to grant a civic boon to a bunch of out-of-town corporations that ought to be embarrassed to be asking a favor from San Francisco. And the Planning Commission should be embarrassed to consider granting it. **SFBG**

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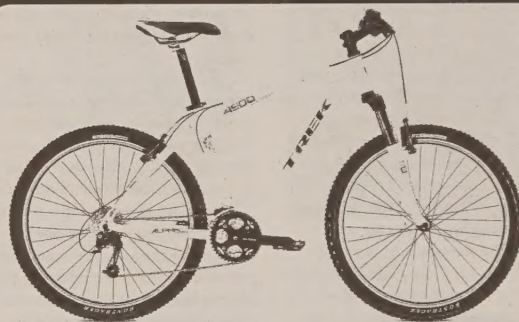
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GUARDIAN

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN NEWS

Thawing ICE

Recent events hurt Mayor Gavin Newsom's case for refusing to enforce sanctuary law

By Sarah Phelan
sarah@sfbg.com

Top San Francisco officials are still refusing to implement legislation approved by the Board of Supervisors that requires due process to play out before immigrant youth accused of felonies are turned over to the federal government, despite recent developments that call into question arguments that have been made against that policy.

Mayor Gavin Newsom, whose veto of the legislation was overridden by the board in November 2009, has been the main obstacle to putting the new policy in place. He has argued that it violates federal law, that the city faces civil liability for harboring undocumented immigrants accused of crimes, and that only serious criminals have been affected by his unilateral 2008 decision to turn minors over to federal authorities before they have been convicted.

But then Muni bus driver Charles Washington's wife, Tracey Washington, and 13-year-old stepson, undocumented immigrants from Australia, were placed under the control of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and ordered deported after the boy got into a fight at his middle school.

The case generated sympathetic media coverage because the

felony charges and deportation order seemed excessive, so the federal government issued a 60-day reprieve to allow the family to finish applying for green cards and so the boy could have his day in juvenile court.

"All this got triggered by the non-implementation of a law that the board duly enacted last year," Washington said March 11, a week after getting his reprieve, expressing exasperation with city officials. "The police are overcharging kids and waiting for someone else to whittle the charges down, and the probation officers are referring the kids to ICE, waiting for someone else to deal with the situation."

Newsom's policy required the city's juvenile probation department to refer Washington's stepson to federal immigration authorities after local police charged the boy with felony robbery, assault, and extortion in a dispute over 46 cents. Authorities then required his mother, rather than his stepfather, to come pick him up and placed an electronic monitoring device on her pending a deportation hearing.

Newsom's policy has had a big impact in the city's immigrant communities. Since July 2008 when the mayor ordered changes to Sanctuary City policies that had been in place for two decades, 125 youths have been referred to ICE,



From left to right: Tracey Washington, Charles Washington, and Angela Chan, staff attorney for the Asian Law Caucus, discuss the city's juvenile immigrant policy at the ALC's office in San Francisco. | GUARDIAN PHOTO BY SARAH PHELAN

according to a March 9 report from the city's Juvenile Probation Department.

In addition to the Mayor's Office, the JPD has refused to enforce policies enacted through legislation by Sup. David Campos that are technically supposed to be the new city policy on referring undocumented youth, and the City Attorney's Office has not required city employees to follow the new law, arguing it can only give advice and not compel departments to take action.

"With the benefit of legal advice provided by the City Attorney's Office and outside legal counsel, and in light of current restrictions imposed by federal law,

particularly the position taken by federal law enforcement authorities, the department has concluded that it cannot modify its policies and practices," probation chief William Siffermann said at a March 4 hearing of the Board of Supervisors Rules Committee on why his department didn't implement the legislation.

Grilled by Campos, Siffermann could not identify a federal law that requires city officials to report kids to federal immigration authorities upon arrest. Instead, Siffermann pointed to what many in the criminal justice community see as U.S. Attorney Joseph Russoniello's overly broad interpretation of federal immigration laws, including his

allegation that transporting arrested juveniles to court hearings amounts to "harboring aliens."

But the Washingtons' case struck a raw nerve at City Hall, and the Obama administration's conciliatory response, along with other recent legal developments, indicate that it isn't the feds that are preventing implementation of Campos' legislation.

In February, Superior Court Judge Charlotte Woolard ruled in a civil case that the Bologna family — of which three members were murdered in 2008, allegedly by Edwin Ramos, an undocumented immigrant who had been in city custody as a juvenile — can't hold

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10 »

Nell Robinson with John Reischman and the Jaybirds

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"The police are over-charging kids and waiting for someone else to whittle the charges down, and the probation officers are referring the kids to ICE, waiting for someone else to deal with the situation."

Charles Washington

ALERTS

By Jobert Poblete
alert@sfbg.com

WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 17

Citywide community meeting
Advocates for homeless youth in San Francisco discuss the upcoming supervisor elections and the proposed sit/lie ordinance, a proposal by Mayor Gavin Newsom to criminalize sitting on sidewalks.
5:30-7 p.m., free
LGBT Community Center
1800 Market, SF
smashbangboom@gmail.com

"Shout! Art by Women Veterans"
The peace and social justice group Swords to Plowshares hosts this two-day event to honor women veterans and bring together community members working to serve them.

6-9 p.m., \$10
1632 C Market, SF
www.swords-to-plowshares.org

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

Poizner on Poizner
The Commonwealth Club hosts Steven Poizner, California's insurance commissioner and a candidate to be the Republican nominee for governor this June. Poizner has stirred controversy recently with his anti-immigrant position, so come listen to or protest his plans for California.

5:30 p.m., \$7-\$45
Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall
3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
www.commonwealthclub.org

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

Planetary grooving
Stomp the Stumps! brings together political rock dance bands to raise money for environmental causes. This year's concert features the Quilt, the Funky Nixons, and the Gary Gates Band. Proceeds go to the Bay Area Coalition for Headwaters and Earth First!
8 p.m., \$10 adv/\$12-\$15
Ashkenaz
1317 San Pablo, Berk.
www.ashkenaz.com

TROUBLETOWN



SATURDAY, MARCH 20

Antiwar march and rally
Another year, another Iraq war anniversary. This one marks the seventh anniversary of the start of the Iraq war. This year's march also supports city hotel workers' contract fights by paying visits to two hotels being boycotted by their union, UNITE HERE Local 2.
11 a.m., free
Civic Center Plaza, SF
www.answersf.org

SUNDAY, MARCH 21

Great American Meatout
Thinking about going vegetarian? To

get you started, the San Francisco Vegetarian Society and Unitarian Universalist Church will host its fifth Meatout Celebration, complete with a vegetarian lunch and free recipes.
12:15-3:30 p.m., \$5
Unitarian Center
1187 Franklin, SF
www.sfvcs.org

TUESDAY, MARCH 23

UC Regents Meeting
Today is the first day of the UC Board of Regents' three-day meeting at UCSF. Inside, the regents will discuss buildings, grounds, and capital projects; outside, there will

be fireworks of sorts as activists mobilize for protests.
2:30 p.m., free
Community Center, UCSF Mission Bay
1675 Owens, SF
www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents#fsgb

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POLITICS

Census officials work to quell fears, John Ross unravels the Mexican drug wars, Downtown's DCCC slate fizzles, white judges, Chevron, Chris Daly's mayoral gambit

PIXEL VISION

Lynn Rapoport tries to forget *Remember Me*, Robyn Johnson investigates a salmonella scare, Juliette Tang loves "Titties and Milk"



NOISE

Caitlin Donohue interviews Chilean rapper Ana Tijoux, Chloe Roth talks to Ed Masuga, Rollercoaster Project, Yeasayer, Bassekou Kouyate, SambaDa



SEX SF

Juliette Tang talks to Whip Smart author Melissa Febos about being a Wall Street domme, Caitlin Donohue rounds up hot sex events this week.

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- 4/15 Disaster Medicine
- 4/22 Light Search and Rescue
- 4/29 Team Organization and Management. Terrorism & NERT
- 5/06 Hands-on Training Skill Development and Application.

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- Process Service/Serving Docs (\$65-\$150)
- County Records/Forms (starting at \$100)
- Harassment \$100
- Civil Matters/General Forms (\$65 ea document)
- Mediation per hour (\$150 Small Claims/\$250 Divorce/\$350 Civil)

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NEWS

ICE CONT.

the city liable for failing to prevent the murders.

That crime had been sensationalized by the San Francisco Chronicle, the San Francisco Examiner, and activist groups, putting pressure on Newsom to change the Sanctuary City policy. Newsom's spokespeople repeatedly have referred to it as an example of the civil liability the city faced.

On March 1 (the same day Washington first went public), City Attorney Dennis Herrera replied to allegations that his office has not done enough to implement Campos' amendment by citing its victory in the Bolognas' civil case, which sought punitive damages and to invalidate the city's sanctuary ordinance.

Herrera also asked Gary Grindler, acting deputy attorney general at the U.S. Department of Justice, to direct the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern District of California to "not use its limited resources to criminally prosecute local officials and employees who abide by California and local laws regarding the reporting of undocumented juvenile immigrants to the federal immigration authorities."

Herrera based his March 12 request on an Oct. 19, 2009 memo that Grindler's predecessor, David Ogden, issued curtailing federal action against medical marijuana dispensaries, which Herrera argued could serve as the model for clarifying the federal position on the city's sanctuary law.

"If city officials and employees follow the mandates of state law, including those regarding the confidentiality of records of juvenile detainees, and the requirements of the amendment permitting the reporting to ICE of juveniles only after they have been adjudicated as wards of the court for criminal conduct, then the U.S. Attorney should not make it a priority to use its scarce federal resources to prosecute those city officials on the theory that by not reporting them at an earlier point, the city officials or employees are guilty of harboring," Herrera wrote.

Campos said he welcomes any effort to get clarification from the feds, but believes such clarification is not necessary — and may not be forthcoming anyway. "So San Francisco should move forward. The law, in my view, allows us to do so, and it's the right thing to do." **SPBG**

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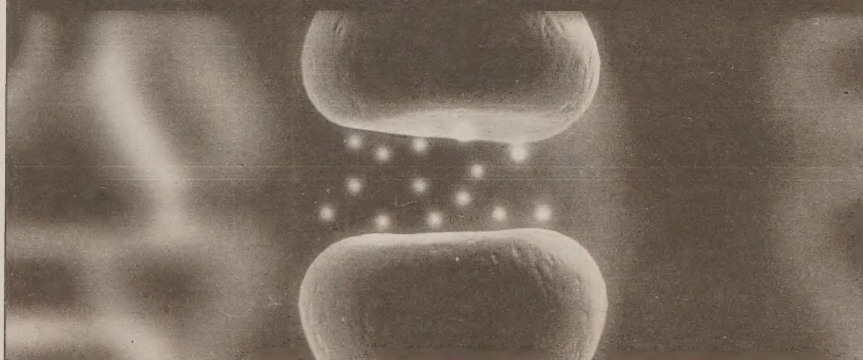
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CONCERT UPDATE



ALPHABET SOUP FEAT. DRED SCOTT
SATURDAY MARCH 20TH - CODA

WED 3/17

ADRIAN GIOVENCO
Coda

ZOO STATION
Slim's

CAMARON DUCHS
SPOOKY FLOWERS
ATLA HERE (FROM
BEATBEAT WHISPER)

GOMEZ
BUDDY
Great American
Music Hall

THU 3/18

LIFE / STYLE
Beauty Bar

HJLK (CD RELEASE)
BIRTHDAY RASH
LOVE IS CHEMICALS
RADERACHER

GOMEZ
ONE EXHIMO
Great American
Music Hall

JICIFER
GRAYCEON
SERPENT CROWN
Three Parkside

FRI 3/19

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS
HUB CITY STOMPERS
COMPTON SF

KAPTRON
JAMES LANMAN
KIT, KAT, AND THE
SUICIDE BROTHERS

ARZO, NO FIRES
CHRIS MARSDL
Rockin' Room

THE PICKUP PATER
SIDDARMA
MIDTOWN DICKENS
El Rio

SAT 3/20

DECEPTION
CAPTAIN ANAS
TWIN CRYSTALS
TUM/TUM

HIGH & TIGHT
CREEP INC.
MAYDAY, MAYDAY
Bomber's

THE JIBBERS
VULTURES AWAIT
SWEET BONES
Pleasant Hill Patis

SUN 3/21

JAKE SHIMABUKURO
Yoshi's SF

J.J. SCHULTZ BAND
EL ZANADOR, LYO
Hotel Utah

KREATOR
KATANKLYSM
EVILE
LIGHTNING SWORDS
OF DEATH

MASSIVE MOTH
YOUR CANNONS
HERE COME THE
SAVIOURS

THE HEMLOCK

MON 3/22

JANELLE MONAE
Cafe Diner

TALL ORDER STANDING
MIKE ROSEN
LAURA MEYER
Rockin' Room

AMERICAN STUDIES
ASH REITER
MARK MATOS & OS
BEACHES

THE ELIN ROOM

TUE 3/23

DEVENDRA BANHART
AND THE GROGS
DOROTHY AND THE
ORIGINALS

JAMIE CULLUM
The Fillmore

JAZZ MAFIA FEAT.
CRYSTAL MOORE HALL
Coda

STAGGER & HALL
THE HOLLOWBOODYS
IDLE THREATS

HOUNDS AND HARLOTS
PUNK ROCK RACKET
The Rockwell

WED 3/24

METRIC
COQUINE VELVET CLUB
NICO VEGA

MARIANA TRENCH
FEVER CHARM
SEAN MCCARDLE

HIGH PLACES
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- Inspect Belts
- Inspect Hoses
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- Rotate Tires
- Inspect CV Boots & Drive Axles
- Inspect Wiper Blades
- Road Test

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- Lubricate Chassis (if applicable)
- Replace Air Filter
- Replace Spark Plugs*
- Adjust Idle Speed (if applicable)
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- Inspect CV Boots & Drive Axles
- Inspect Belts
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- Inspect Parking Brakes
- Road Test Vehicle

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- Replace Spark Plugs*
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- Replace Transmission Fluid
- Replace Brake Fluid
- Replace Coolant
- Replace Axle Fluid (if applicable)
- Check and Adjust Engine Timing (if applicable)
- Check & Adjust Belts (if needed)
- Pressure Test Cooling System
- Inspect Hoses & Clamps
- Inspect Cooling System
- Service Battery & Connections
- Test Charging System
- Set Proper Tire Air Pressure
- Rotate Tires
- Adjust Steering Gear Box (if applicable)
- Inspect Front & Rear Brakes
- Adjust Parking Brake (if needed)
- Inspect Calipers, Rotors & Drums
- Check & Adjust Clutch (if applicable)
- Lubricate Hinges, Locks & Latches
- Check Fuel System Filters
- Inspect CV, Boots & Drive Axles
- Inspect Exhaust System
- Inspect Steering System
- Inspect & Lubricate Suspension
- Check Exterior Lights
- Inspect Wiper Blades
- Road Test Vehicle

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- Inspect front axles & driveshaft
- Inspect output shaft seals
- Inspect rear main seal
- Road test
- Lifetime adjustments

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- Adjust parking brake (if needed)
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- Road test

*Price for your vehicle may vary. Call for details.

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- Road test

Why You Need to Replace The Timing Belt

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PRELIMINUM

INTERFERENCE

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By Steven T. Jones and Rebecca Bowe
news@sfbg.com

California voters are about to be bombarded by more than \$50 million in political advertising designed to convince them to approve a pair of measures desperately sought by two powerful corporations with a long history of lies and political corruption.

Will this brazen and transparently self-serving effort work? And what does it say about the state of modern politics — particularly California's money-driven initiative system — that these deceptive campaigns just might convince voters to cast ballots against their own interests?

The corporations have every incentive to try to buy the election — and if they win, it could encourage others to follow. By spending tens of millions of dollars on a campaign today, they will potentially save and earn many times that over the long run. It's a business decision, plain and simple.

If Pacific Gas & Electric Co. can pass Proposition 16, which requires a two-thirds vote for any municipalities to do renewable energy projects and deliver that power directly to consumers, that will kill the chances of government-backed rivals popping up to compete. It will save the company the tens of millions of dollars it regularly spends to defeat public power campaigns across the state.

If Mercury Insurance is successful with Proposition 17, which overturns part of the landmark insurance reform measure Prop. 103 and would allow companies to increase the car insurance premiums for new drivers and those whose coverage has lapsed, a company notorious for mistreating customers and defying regulators will be able to greatly increase its market share and profits.

Both measures are strongly opposed by legitimate consumer rights groups, public interest advocates, and almost all of San Francisco's elected officials. But both corporations have proven to be unusually effective over the years at using lavish spending — with money extracted from consumers — to convince private groups and public officials from both major parties to do their bidding.

And plenty of public officials who ought to be opposing the measures are either on the wrong side or silent.

Will Mercury-backed Californians for Fair Auto Insurance Rates (which calls itself Cal-FAIR) be able to convince voters that Prop. 17 is really about saving drivers money? And will PG&E-financed Californians to Protect our Right to Vote succeed in making the case that supermajority thresholds are a needed safeguard against the electricity schemes of elected officials?

That all depends on how informed voters are when they cast their ballots.

MERCURY RISING

Mercury Insurance founder and chairman George Joseph became a billionaire by offering car insurance policies to California drivers who were at a higher risk for accidents than most other companies would accept, charging

Buying power

How PG&E and Mercury Insurance are spending millions to try to trick Californians into voting for corporate interests



Mercury Insurance founder George Joseph has made hundreds of millions of dollars on car insurance policies in California. | GUARDIAN ILLUSTRATION BY DEVON DOSS

them expensive rates and then challenging their claims.

When Forbes magazine named Joseph the 283rd richest American in 2005, with an estimated worth of \$1.2 billion, it wrote laudably about the practice in describing him: "Numbers guru earned Harvard math and physics degree in three years. Began as actuarial trainee at Occidental Life for \$225 a month, quit after realizing salesmen made more. Created own property and casualty insurance company. The Mercury General 1962: targeted customers having trouble getting auto insurance; aggressively investigated suspicious claims. Took public 1985."

Mercury currently has about \$2.3 billion in market capital and a stock price that has roughly doubled in the year since the company began funding a \$3.5 million signature-gathering effort to place Prop. 17 on the June

ballot. That may be a coincidence, but it's certainly true that Mercury's fortunes are tied up with California motorists.

The company's most recent annual report, filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission last month, shows California car insurance policies are the lion's share of the company's business. Almost 80 percent of its premiums are in California (followed by Florida, Texas, and New Jersey), and 83.2 percent of its \$2.6 billion in total premiums cover private passenger cars (as opposed to commercial auto, homeowners, and other insurance products). In California, 81 percent of Mercury customers earned "good driver" discounts, while 19 percent are in higher-risk categories, paying much higher monthly premiums.

California's car insurance regulation system was created almost entirely by the 1988 pro-consumer ballot measure Prop. 103. That initia-

tive established a system of regulatory oversight and financial transparency, cutting premiums by about 20 percent and limiting what companies could consider when assigning rates.

The main rating factors, in descending order of importance, are customers' driving safety records, number of miles they drive each year, and the number of years they have been driving — which all have a direct relationship to the odds of having an accident.

Before Prop. 103 went into effect in 1990, insurance companies could pretty much charge whatever they wanted, based on whatever criteria they saw fit. And that freedom became a gold mine in 1984 when the California Legislature required all drivers to have car insurance.

"After that, everyone in the marketplace is required to buy insurance and there's no protection against how much insurance companies could charge you for it, or even if they refused to sell it to you because of where you lived or the color of your skin. There were just no protections," said Harvey Rosenfield, founder of Consumer Watchdog.

So Rosenfield wrote Prop. 103 and he's been battling Mercury Insurance ever since. They've tangled in the halls of the Legislature, where politicians from both major parties have received millions of dollars in campaign contributions to push bills to undermine Prop. 103. They've fought in court in countless hearings over more than two decades, most recently on March 12 in a dispute over Prop. 17 ballot language and arguments. And they've fought in the court of public opinion, right up to today, as Rosenfield leads the fight to defeat Prop. 17.

"One of the most pernicious practices after the Legislature said you have to buy insurance was that when you went to the insurance companies and said, 'OK, I'm required by law to buy insurance, now sell it to me.' They'd say, well you didn't have it before, so we're not going to sell it to you now. Or, you didn't have it before so therefore we're going to surcharge you and double the price of insurance. Talk about a Catch 22," Rosenfield said.

Rosenfield and other consumer advocates appealed to legislators, but, he said, "Of course, the Legislature was too beholden to the insurance lobbyists to do any of the proposals that we were offering, so we went to the ballot box in 1988." And despite an \$80 million campaign financed by the insurance industry, Rosenfield's group won — sort of.

"No longer would your ZIP code be the dominant determinant for how much you pay," Rosenfield said. But the struggle to implement the law continued. "That battle, just to get that put in place, we didn't win that until 20 years after [Prop.] 103 began. We won basically in 2006, 18 years later, after court challenges and going to the [insurance] commissioner."

INSURANCE POLITICS

Mercury was one of the major industry players challenging Prop. 103 in court. The company also deftly worked the political system, most scandalously through former Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, a Democrat now running for mayor of Oakland. Mercury not only gave extensive political contributions to Perata, who

then carried legislation for Mercury, including a bill to basically do what Prop. 17 would do, but a San Francisco Chronicle investigation in 2004 found that Mercury's cash allegedly went into Perata's personal account in a money-laundering scheme that reportedly triggered an FBI investigation and raid on Perata's house (no charges were ultimately filed).

Rosenfield described how the company operates in the political arena: "Mercury realizes it's going to lose the civil suit, goes to Sacramento, spreads a fortune in campaign contributions, and lo and behold, gets a bill passed overriding this provision of Prop. 103, legalizing its surcharges. [Gov. Gray] Davis vetoes it in 2002 on the grounds it violates Prop. 103. Another year goes by, Mercury spreads even more money around, and this time Davis is in a recall election and needs Mercury's money. So he takes the money — it's \$100,000 or more — and Davis signs the bill. We have to go to court and challenge the bill as an unconstitutional amendment to Proposition 103, which we finally succeed in doing and it's upheld by the Court of Appeals in 2005. All that time, Mercury is overcharging people. Ultimately, Mercury is told that the law you sponsored is invalid and you can't do it anymore, so it stops in 2005 — 10 years of wanton, brazen violation of the law. And that brings us to the Mercury initiative."

Joseph refused to talk to us (he grants almost no press interviews) and Mercury spokesperson Coby King referred questions to Kathy Fairbanks, who heads the Mercury-sponsored Cal-FAIR.

But when we noted that this group is supposedly independent of Mercury, and that my questions were about the company's history of hostility to Prop. 103, King finally made this comment: "Prop. 103 is the law of the land, but to the extent there are improvements that can be made that are pro-business and pro-consumer, Mercury has not been shy about acting in the public interest."

POWER PLAYS

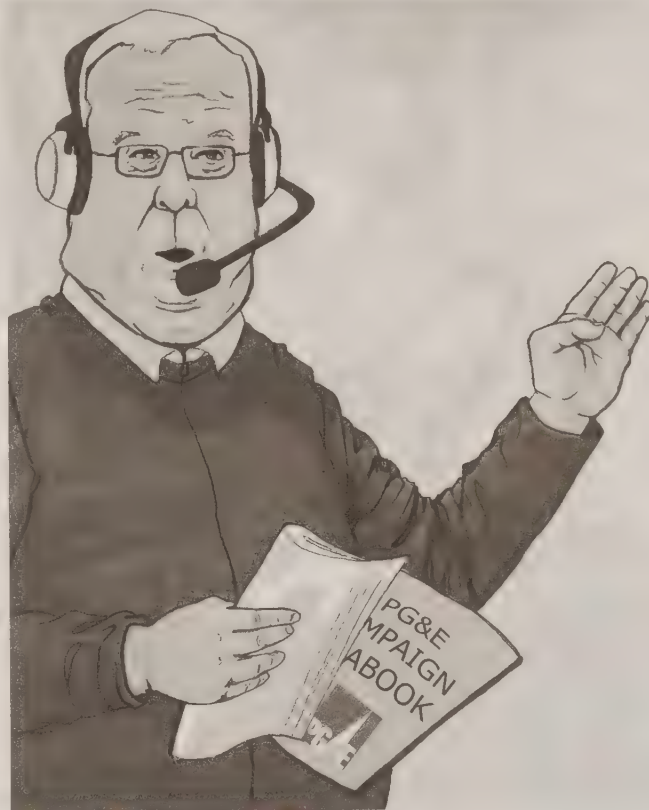
Another corporation that has not been shy about flexing its muscle in the political arena is SF-based PG&E, California's largest and most influential utility company. It is single-handedly bankrolling the Yes on 16 Campaign. Dubbed the "Taxpayers Right to Vote Act," Prop. 16 was crafted by a Sacramento public relations outfit and law firm that have long histories with PG&E. Its goal: end the expansion of public power in California.

The utility has amassed a war chest of funding to sink into passing Prop. 16, which would make it difficult for municipal governments to break into the electricity business by requiring a two-thirds vote at the ballot before any such efforts could get underway.

Last month, PG&E executives notified shareholders that the estimated \$35 million expenditure for the Prop. 16 campaign would affect individual share values by 6 cents to 9 cents. Following on the heels of this news brief was the revelation that PG&E CEO Peter Darbee received a total compensation of \$9.4 million in 2009, reflecting a 9 percent pay spike from the previous year, according to the Associated Press.

Since PG&E Corp., the parent corporation, derives 100 percent of its revenue from PG&E Co., the utility company regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission, critics have argued that PG&E is using ratepayers' money to finance a campaign ultimately

high — and PG&E is prepared to pull out every trick in the book to win the Yes on 16 campaign. And yes, there actually is a playbook for how to use deceptive tactics to win these campaigns, a copy of which was obtained by the Guardian.



Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. CEO Peter Darbee is running the Prop. 16 campaign according to a well-defined playbook. | GUARDIAN ILLUSTRATION BY DEVON DOSS

designed to limit ratepayers' ability to choose their electricity provider.

As the utility seeks to alter the state constitution with Prop. 16, it is also boldly pursuing a rate hike of roughly 20 percent by 2011. Winning the Prop. 16 campaign could trigger an economic boon for PG&E since it would dramatically decrease the potential for municipal competitors to spring up and win over customers with lower rates, cleaner power, and more reliable service. Locking in such a monopoly would leave consumers with little choice but to endure rate hikes.

If Prop. 16 fails, however, the utility company's financial outlook will be dicey. If twin efforts at green, community choice aggregation (CCA) programs moving steadily forward in San Francisco and Marin County prove successful, PG&E could see a depletion of its customer base from those territories and any other municipalities that follow suit.

What this means is that the stakes are

PG&E'S PROPAGANDA MANUAL

The San Francisco public relations firm Solem & Associates, which has worked with PG&E for nearly 30 years, has produced a step-by-step guide tailored specifically to its anti-public-power campaign needs. This hefty insiders' playbook is titled "Defending Your Shareholder-Owned Electric Company Against New Municipalization Threats: A Tactical Guide."

Jonathan Kaufman and Anne Solem, both executive vice presidents, are listed as coauthors. Kaufman is a white-haired guy with owl-like spectacles who can be seen regularly in the public seating section in meetings at City Hall, furiously scribbling notes, whenever the city's green CCA program is up for discussion. He did not return the Guardian's calls for comment.

The key strategy explained in Solem & Associates' playbook is to create the impression that there are influential community leaders and a grassroots coalition agitating independently for the company's agenda — when in

fact the entire campaign is funded, organized, and run by one corporation.

Although the playbook never comes out to state just how the utility should go about persuading these "community allies" to see things their way, it makes it clear such allies are crucial to convince legislators, voters, and the general public that electricity programs run by municipal entities are "fraught with financial risks and other hazards."

The playbook even recommends seeing to it that "independent" studies are published with findings that support this claim. "To provide third-party credibility to your company's point of view ... develop various reports and studies that analyze the risks and costs involved in a new public power takeover," the playbook suggests. "It is preferable that the studies come from an independent group rather than your company."

At certain junctures, Kaufman and Solem blatantly encourage the electric company to engage in misleading practices to hide the influence of campaign consultants working to advance a corporate agenda. "Develop opinion editorials and draft letters to the editor," the playbook instructs. "Then ask your community supporters to personalize them and submit them to local newspapers."

It's interesting, given this advice, that a Twitter feed posted recently by Californians to Protect Our Right to Vote, a PG&E-bankrolled front group set up to promote the Yes on 16 campaign, highlights two different op-eds in the Fresno Bee and Sacramento Bee published within two days of one another. Both editorials were written in support of Prop. 16 — one from a former sheriff of Sacramento, and the other from a former city council member of Fresno. Both editorials mention budget cuts to police and fire departments in the second paragraph. Both express surprise at the publications' editorials against Prop. 16 in the fourth paragraph. Both cite the same statistic in the second-to-last paragraph. And both conclude with the words: "Taxpayers Right to Vote Act." Is it a strange coincidence?

The playbook contains specific instructions for media-relations techniques, too. "Identify several community and business leaders who are willing to serve as spokespersons for your company," the playbook recommends. "Try to keep the community leadership out in front of the reporters. Your community supporters can be much more effective with the media than perhaps your company's own spokesperson."

In other words: Try not to let anyone know that this is nothing more than a special-interest campaign.

Solem & Associates also suggests planting people at key local government meetings (in case of public comment, "provide them with talking points," Solem & Associates recommends).

ON THE GROUND

How these tactics get played out in real life can be seen this year in the fight between the PG&E and Mercury front groups, and the eclectic coalition of grassroots organizations and public officials who are opposing them.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14 »

Corporations CONT.

Jeff Shields, general director of South San Joaquin Irrigation District, a body governed by five elected board members, described how PG&E operates in testimony to a legislative hearing in Sacramento last month.

"PG&E attends every board meeting of SSJID, often taking video and tape recordings of our meetings, and they fund political consulting firms to campaign against our efforts and pepper us with Public Records Act requests," he said. "Never once has a voter in our service area had the opportunity to cast a vote to allow PG&E to provide service and never have our citizens been afforded an option to vote for a PG&E Board member or attend — let alone record — a PG&E meeting."

Yet all of the rhetoric by PG&E's Californians to Protect the Right to Vote perversely casts the measure

Commission, raised the possibility that if the utility is able to amass so much funding for a ballot initiative, its rates are too high. "The indisputable truth is that PG&E's rates are set by the CPUC to provide capital to invest in needed infrastructure. If rates are so generous that PG&E can create a \$35 million slush fund for political adventurism, something is seriously wrong."

Indeed, Sup. Ross Mirkarimi, who shepherded the creation of this city's CCA, Clean Power SF, told a recent Harvey Milk Democratic Club forum that the campaign raises larger concerns about corporate power.

"Know what? If we're gonna lose, we go down as warriors. And if we win, then we win not for San Francisco or Marin, but we win to address the very fact that Washington is not moving in the direction we would like addressing climate change," Mirkarimi said. "The complete corporate hubris and arrogance in that they think they can continue to operate in the way that they have is unimaginable."

The people representing these corporations and their front groups, such as Cal-FAIR director Kathy Fairbanks, stressed to us the "broad coalitions" that support their measures. Those coalitions include "consumer groups" such as Consumers First and Consumer Coalition of California — each which seem to be comprised of only single individuals that back business-friendly measures each election.

Fairbanks defends claims that Prop. 16 would lower rates for most Californians, citing state figures that 80 percent of drivers in the state have continuous coverage and therefore could qualify for the discount even if they change carriers to a provider like Mercury that generally offers lower rates than many of its competitors.

And while she grudgingly acknowledges that premium discounts for some are always offset by increases for others, she said the measures would create more "competitive markets" that would cause insurance companies to lower costs and decrease rates across-the-board. "They're going to do whatever they need to do to get more customers," she said.

Asked whether Mercury's bad reputation, and the difficulty many voters will have in believing that they're spending millions of dollars to lower the premiums they collect, hurt the campaigns' chances of winning, she said, "Voters are not going to do anything more than read the measures and vote in their interests."

Rosenfield agreed that this campaign could turn on who can

convince voters where their interests lie. "Here's the issue in a nutshell: will California voters be duped by a \$20 million insurance initiative campaign in which the insurance company has to hide behind a phony front group?"

COMPLICIT DEMOCRATS?

After Prop. 17 qualified for the ballot last year, the struggle to defeat it moved into the office of Attorney General Jerry Brown — who is running for the Democratic Party nomination for governor — and again Rosenfield was frustrated by the unwillingness of powerful Democrats to challenge Mercury Insurance.

The Attorney General's Office writes the ballot title and summary for all initiatives. Given the complexity of insurance law and attractiveness of claims by proponents that the measure would save consumers money ("as much as \$250 per year" for "your family," proponents claim in their ballot arguments), the language of the summary could decide the outcome of the election.

Initially, last August, the AG's office summarized the measure as "allows insurance companies to increase or decrease the cost of auto insurance based on a driver's coverage history," something that seemed to accurately capture what it would do.

"Mercury went crazy because I guess their polling showed that if voters read that it allowed insurance companies to raise your premium, they wouldn't vote for it. So Mercury made a completely cosmetic change to the ballot measure, refiled it, and this time, magically, the title and summary comes back from Jerry Brown's office: 'allows insurance companies to discount your premiums.' Nothing about raising them, nothing about surcharges. It was outrageous," Rosenfield told us when we met with him on Feb. 9.

Consumer Watchdog formally challenged the language and issued press releases shaming Brown, which resulted in a minor scandal in which a Brown aide got fired for illegally recording a telephone conversation he had with Chronicle reporter Carla Marinucci about the issue. By Feb. 5, Brown's office had retreated slightly, including the line "may allow insurance companies to increase costs of insurance to drivers who do not qualify for a discount," but it came below the emphasis on the discount and had weak language that didn't reflect reality.

Eventually, after Rosenfield submitted studies proving this reality to the AG's office, it issued language that Consumer Watchdog

"The complete corporate hubris and arrogance in that they think they can continue to operate in the way that they have is unimaginable."

Ross Mirkarimi

as about voting rights, even though this undemocratic measure protects an unelected power provider and is promoted with money that ratepayers didn't approve for the purpose. "I am a California veteran," Shields said. "I defended this country in uniform and I am appalled that PG&E has stated in no uncertain terms that its shareholders are paying to amend our constitution. If that is true, then it is important to examine who those shareholders are."

He pointed out that Barclays Global Investors U.K. Holdings, Ltd., a U.K. bank, owns roughly 4 percent of PG&E shares, while JP Morgan Chase & Co. owns around 2.5 percent. "If these foreign banks and Wall Street institutional investors are truly at will to manipulate the California Constitution and this legislature has no ability to prevent that, God help us all, for the greed that motivates PG&E's Proposition 16 is only the first thread to be pulled from the fabric that binds our society."

John Geesman, a former member and director of the California Energy

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Corporations CONT.

finds fair and accurate: "Permits companies to reduce or increase cost of insurance depending on whether driver has a history of continuous insurance coverage."

Then something strange happened. Due to what AG's spokesperson Christine Gaspara labeled a "clerical error," the office inadvertently sent the old, weaker "may allow" language over to the Secretary of State's Office. And because they didn't realize this before the deadline passed, the AG had to sue the state and its ballot printer to get the correct language in the voter guide.

On March 12, Judge Allen Sumner ruled against Mercury, so the language will read: "Will allow insurance companies to increase costs of insurance to drivers who do not have a history of continuous coverage," which the official ballot argument against Prop. 17 says will be "\$1,000/year (based on Mercury's numbers)."

Meanwhile, Rosenfield has also been jousting with Assembly Member Dave Jones (D-Sacramento), who is running for Insurance Commissioner this year, trying to shore up his opposition to Prop. 17 over the last few months. When we spoke last month, Rosenfield said Jones privately said he opposed the measure but had yet to do so publicly.

But Jones, who has a strong voting record supporting consumer rights, told us the criticism wasn't accurate, and that he has consistently opposed the measure. "As I campaign throughout the state, I point to Prop. 17 as a measure that we should defeat ... Certainly what Mercury is proposing in Prop. 17 would be bad policy and I oppose it. It undermines Prop. 103."

Like Rosenfield and other critics of the measure, Jones said the measure is bad for all Californians because it makes insurance more expensive for those who haven't had coverage. "The danger here is that the dramatic price increases could cause these drivers to drive without insurance — and that is dangerous for all of us," reads a statement on his Web site.

But the cached Web site function on Google shows that statement was the only one of nine issue statements that wasn't on the site as of Jan. 30. Asked when the statement was posted, Jones told us he directed staff to include it "some time ago, but we've had some issues with our site. It may have gone up recently for all I know."

Jones' Democratic primary challenger, Assembly member Hector de la Torre (D-Los Angeles County),

has made an issue of his stand on the measure, telling us, "I came out very clearly and strongly on the measure and I wasn't calculating or cautious ... I came out against it months ago and I'm working within the Democratic Party to have them oppose it."

The state party has yet to take a stand on the measure, and neither Democratic Party executive director Bob Mulholland nor chair John Burton returned our calls on the issue, just as Rosenfield told us he "can't get Burton to return my calls." But he remains hopeful the party will oppose the measure at its April convention and put money into defeating it.

"I'd like to think the Democrats will stand up against this insurance company, but Mercury Insurance is very politically connected and the Democratic Party, as we know all too well lately, doesn't seem to have that kind of backbone," Rosenfield said.

San Francisco Democratic Party chair Aaron Peskin said he's confident the state party will join the fight to defeat it: "This is a complete abuse of the initiative process and the voters of California should not be fooled."

BAD ACTORS

Rosenfield isn't the only one who has battled with Mercury for many years. "I've been after them for 20 years, so this is not a new issue for me," said U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (D-East Bay), who served as California's first Insurance Commissioner from 1991 to 1995 and then again from 2003 to 2007. "He [Joseph] has refused to accept the fact that the world has changed around him."

Beyond just trying to change the rules, Mercury has blatantly ignored them, as a decade's worth of documents from the Department of Insurance that were released last month show, triggering upcoming legislative inquiries. In 275 pages unearthed by the Chronicle and then obtained by the Guardian, Mercury documents show the company illegally discriminating against certain professions, including soldiers, artists, bartenders, and traveling salespeople.

The Department of Insurance, now headed by a Republican, singles out Mercury as an especially bad actor with a history of hostility to regulation. As Rosenfield told us Feb. 9, "Here's what California Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner said about Mercury in a case that's actually going to be heard tomorrow in Oakland. This is a quote: 'Mercury's lengthy history of serious misconduct and its attitude, contempt towards and/or abuse of its customers, the commissioner, its competition, and

"Money talks. It always has, particularly in propositions, and the odds are money will talk again."

John Garamendi

the Superior Court are all relevant to determining the penalty needed to best ensure the protection of the public for future violations and wrongdoing.' In my 22 years of working on insurance stuff, I've never heard the Department of Insurance refer to a company like that."

And here in San Francisco, the Guardian has a long history of exposing political corruption by PG&E, from essentially bribing local officials to give it control of the city electricity system — in direct violation of the Raker Act, the federal legislation that authorized the city to construct O'Shaughnessy Dam — to illegally funneling money into anti-public-power campaigns (one such violation in 2002 resulted in the largest fine ever issued by the San Francisco Ethics Commission).

The record on both companies is clearly malevolent, their political dealings utterly corrupt. Good government advocates say Props. 16 and 17 represent a clear litmus test on the power of corporations to push their interests ahead of the general public's in California.

"To me, it's a classic case study of what's going on with the initiative process in California and politics in general," said Derek Cressman, western regional director of Common Cause. "These are two initiatives literally sponsored by corporations to push very narrow interests."

"They are laws designed to give a financial advantage to a specific industry or company," Garamendi said, adding that he is afraid the effort may be successful. "Money talks. It always has, particularly in propositions, and the odds are money will talk again."

Sen. Mark Leno (D-SF), who also opposes both measures, was a bit more hopeful: "Californians have been savvy in the past, and I do believe they'll be able to see through the tens of millions of dollars in misleading ads." **SFBG**

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City slick: Urban Tavern ups the gastropub ante with refined takes on the bacon cheeseburger (left) and fresh pretzel (right).



Taverns of the city

By Paul Reidinger
paulr@sfbg.com

DINE A cardinal rule of urban living is that hotel restaurants are to be approached with caution, especially if the hotel is a tentacle of one of the

national chain monsters. Some of San Francisco's best restaurants are in hotels, but those hotels tend to be chic and boutique-y. In the bigger, blander establishments, you're likely to find yourself eating cioppino from a hollowed-out round of sourdough bread while the whole restaurant spins slowly, like a sideways Ferris wheel in some sad circus.

Urban Tavern is in the Hilton near Union Square — an ominous portent — but once you're inside, you'd never know you were on the ground floor of a gigantic corporate box. The space doesn't look like any tavern I've ever been in, but it certainly is urban in the best sense: designed but not over-designed, with a few big touches — such as the multicolored horse, sculpted of metal — and plenty of small ones, such as the lampposts made to look like the trunks of slender trees. The restaurant is also bigger than it looks from the street; it runs deep into the build-

ing, and maybe this is one reason that noise, which from the signs (many hard surfaces and a general modernist edge) should be a horrific problem, is hardly an issue at all.

Urban Tavern styles itself a "gastropub," but it could as well be a wine bar since the wine list is extensive and interesting — and, as an added fillip, all bottles are half-price on Sundays. (The mark-down includes half-bottles, which are as well-represented here as any place I'm aware of.) But whether your fancy is beer, wine, or a soigné cocktail, chef Colin Duggan's cooking holds up its end of the deal, and then some. Duggan was present at the restaurant's creation in August 2008, and his current menu reflects a tasty dynamism with, as seems to be *de rigueur* at the moment, a German touch or two, such as a wonderful fresh pretzel (\$11), served with slices of grilled cagiano beer sausage (garlicky, like kielbasa), and a broad smear of country mustard.

If your heart lies on the other side of the Rhine, you'll certainly respond to the cheese puffs (a.k.a. gougères, \$5 for three), which are indeed puffy — like little domed stadiums with big pockets of warm, fragrant air inside — and also impressively glazed, I would guess from a proper egg wash. In a similar vein we

find a pair of turnovers (\$10), pastry triangles the size of sandwich halves filled with crab and king trumpet mushrooms for a sea-sweet, if slightly muted, effect.

The main courses do tend toward tavernishness. There is a burger, along with steak frites and a couple versions of ribs, baby-back and spare, the last being served with a red-wine-based *jus* we found meaty and slightly sweet. But there is plenty of sophistication too, as in a sturgeon filet (\$22) plated atop a jumble of green lentils, sun-dried tomatoes, and braised winter greens. Sturgeon are best-known for their roe, which we call caviar, but their white flesh is dense, meaty, and possibly the most delicious of the freshwater fish. In this country, sturgeon are also farm-raised to an environmental standard that makes them a "good alternative," according to the Seafood Watch program of the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

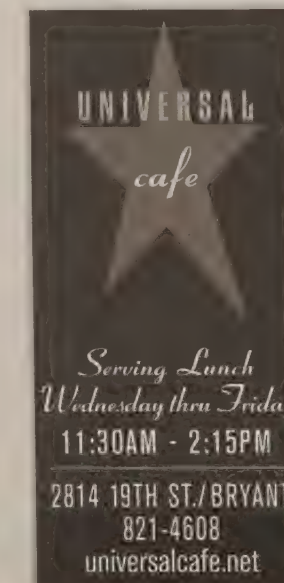
Of course, no gastropub menu would be complete without a vegetarian option, which at Urban Tavern is called a stew (\$15) and consists of an iron skillet filled with a variety of roasted vegetables, including broccoli and cauliflower florets, butter beans, carrots, butternut squash, split Brussels sprouts, and zucchini, all liberally seasoned with Parmesan cheese and moistened, at your discretion, from the pitcher of vegetable reduc-

tion on the side. It takes a certain nerve to do so little to vegetables and a certain faith that from the babble of different voices, a melody will emerge. But it does.

Desserts seem a little pricey at \$9 a pop. We very much liked the peanut butter cup, a big disk of peanut butter mousse lacquered with dark chocolate in perhaps the ultimate marriage of New World delectables. The cup was presented with a wafer of peanut brittle and pat of peanut butter ice cream, which we found creamy and peanut buttery but slack somehow, as if a contrasting ingredient had gone missing. The banana trifle, served in a milk jar, was like a slice of banana-cream pie transformed into a parfait with good banana flavor but a bit too much sweetness. Even sweeter than German wine, and that's pretty sweet. **SFBG**

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Homecoming

By L.E. Leone

le.chicken.farmer@gmail.com

CHEAP EATS

Dear Earl Butter,
Thank you for putting real flowers and tiny plastic battery-operated candles in your closet for me. I slept like an angel that snores like a truck driver. Speaking of which, thank you for the chili and cornbread too. It made my homecoming that much sweeter and spicier, in addition to giving me gas. Which I am happy to have, and *allowed* to have, praise God, now that I'm back in a Free Country.

Plus the Maze of course, being beautiful, was waiting for me at the airport with a huge colorfully hand-painted sign that read, "Welcome home, Dani. We love you." Signed: "The Bay Area."

He admits having had help with the wording from at least one person, and with the painting from a couple more, so maybe there is some truth to this. If so, the feeling is very very mutual.

I will never leave the Bay Area ever again, not even to go camping. Just think, while my ex and my ex's ex-ex are holed up together in their dark, cold, provincial town in southern Germany, clinging to each other's small corner of obscurity, writing and editing their mediocre novel that is *set* in San Francisco, I get to *live* here. And love and be loved, and play and work and eat here.

I can't speak for working, exactly, but it's the greatest playing and eating place in the world that I know of. Here.

There, do you know what they eat, Earl? Well, the ex's ex-ex doesn't cook, and my ex's specialty is ramen noodles. That's what they call cooking. When they go out, it's for sushi. Really *really* bad landlocked German sushi. Imagine!

Meanwhile, I have been shucking fresh-picked oysters and scallops on the west coast of France, inventing home-raised cherry chicken-heart stew, eating up Paris and Rome, hobnobbing with extraterrestrials, crunching into crack conch in the Caribbean, and passing the guitar with a couple Haitian boys outside their single-family chicken-coop shack.

And now ... now I get to go get a burrito. Whenever. The fuck. I want. Because that's what San Francisco

is. It's "what kind of beans," the best of all-things-edible, and raw onions and garlic no matter who you might breathe on afterward. No problem. We *live* here.

Anyway, I do. You do. And I do again. I can't think of a more appropriate way to celebrate my 20-year anniversary of moving to San Francisco than moving *back* to San Francisco.

St. Patrick's Day 1990 was the day. I still remember my amazement, the air and the sky. Thank you for getting me back in, Earl — albeit on the ground floor, literally, with an option on your upstairs apartment's closet. But I breathe better in closets than I did in small-town Germany, and I see more sky in one heartbeat here, through my dirty, barred sidewalk window, than I saw all this winter there. The Winter of My Discombobulation.

And now, if you will excuse me, m'dear, I have to go recomboobulate. *Peace and pickles, Your L.E.*

Dear Lady of SF,

That is great. We went to Urbun Burger because the Mission has a lot of places to eat. You wanted to walk around because you have returned. I know the area and fear I will never be able to leave, except, perhaps for my parents' funerals. We went to the Community Thrift where 15 or so years ago, you found that really neat 49ers glass, and that made me jealous because I never, ever found a glass I really liked. Years later, when I read in your column that it had broken, I was happy. Karma, sigh, is on me.

But Urbun Burger. Lotta money, lotta meat. These burgers are 1/2 pounders. It was not \$10 for my California Sensation burger, it was \$9.50, and naturally I did not pay. There are a couple of burgers over \$10, but they come with good fries. Super selection of condiments and a real nice, lively atmosphere. I enjoyed the colors in there. So did you.

And so it ends, my fit of usefulness to the good people of San Francisco. Yours begins anew. Welcome back. I hear it is a very good town. — *Earl Butter SFBG*

URBUN BURGER

Mon.-Thu. 11 a.m. – 10 p.m.;
Fri.-Sat. 11 a.m. – 3 a.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. – 10 p.m.

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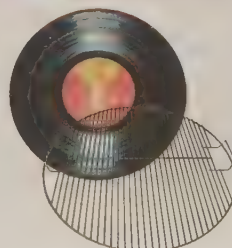
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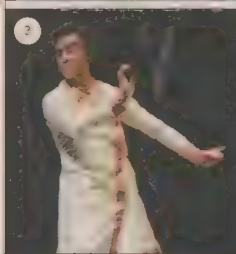
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GUARDIAN

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WEDNESDAY MARCH 17

DANCE

Ben Levy

Folk and social dancing exert a pull on the imagination because they allow for participation even if you have two left feet. Ben Levy's *Intimate Visibility* — part of Dancers Group's ONSITE program, which sponsors free public performances in primarily outdoor locations — is a contemporary version of the informal dances at family gatherings. Instead of making friends on Facebook, Levy suggests trying it on the street. He designed the piece for video installation, dancers, and a flash mob. Unlike ONSITE's first participant, Patrick Makuakane, who put his "Hit and Run" Hula dancers on a city bus and performed, more or less randomly, at 10 different locations on a single day, Levy is traveling his intimate show for hundreds through April 26. **(Rita Felciano)**

8 p.m., free
Washington Square, SF
9 p.m., free
Union Square, SF
415-920-9181
www.dancersgroup.org

MUSIC

Filthy Thieving Bastards

Prepare yourself for a punk rock Paddy's Day with an all-star

lineup that'll do Brendan Behan proud. Counting members of the Swingin' Utters among their rank, the Filthy Thieving Bastards combine the influences of their independent upbringing with the sounds of the legendary Pogues and other folk-fueled rockers. The band's material runs from stripped down working-class ballads to raucous tunes. Special guests include Blag Dahlia of the Dwarves, Zander Schloss of the Circle Jerks, and Sean Wheeler of Throwrag. **(Sean McCourt)**

8 p.m., \$10
Thee Parkside
1600 17th St., SF
(415) 252-1330
www.theeparkside.com

MUSIC

Gomez

After winning the Mercury Music Prize for its debut album *Bring It On* (Hut/Virgin) in 1998, Gomez didn't bask in its newfound success. Instead, it headed back to the studio, created another album, and hasn't looked back since. Twelve years later, the "How We Operate" rockers from across the pond are on the brink of their sixth studio album, *A New Tide* (ATO). Opening acts for its three-night stint include Buddy, One eskimo, and the Little Ones. **(Elise-Marie Brown)**

9 p.m. (through Fri/19), \$28
Great American Music Hall

859 O'Farrell, SF
(415) 885-0750
www.gamh.com

THURSDAY MARCH 18

MUSIC

Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni Ba

It was only a matter of time before the swirling, seductive sounds of West Africa made significant inroads into American indie music, and the past couple years have finally seen that come to a rightful fruition. A case in point is Sub Pop's launch of its world music offshoot Next Ambiance, whose first release *I Speak Fula* by Mali's Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni Ba is an intoxicating brew of soaring griot sing-song and near-mystical finger-picking on Kouyate's native ngoni lute. **(Brady Welch)**

With DJ Said
8 p.m., \$20-\$25
Slim's
333 11th St., SF
(415) 255-0333
www.slims-sf.com

MUSIC

Shout at the Devil Karaoke

I go to my share of live shows, but some of my best 2010 musical experiences have been courtesy of Shout at the Devil Karaoke. Traveling KJ Nathan is gradually accumulating a song list that'll please or at

least appease those with a taste for metal, and there are other odd delights (Strawberry Switchblade's "Since Yesterday," anyone?) mixed in with the standards. For some reason, I'm drawn to Foreigner lately. Maybe it's my double vision. But my ears have enjoyed Genevieve's note- and look-perfect update of Olivia Newton John's "Magic," and the way anyone can walk in off the street and blow everyone away. **(Johnny Ray Huston)**

9 p.m., free
Pissed Off Pete's
4528 Mission, SF
(415) 584-5122
www.facebook.com/pages/shout-at-the-devil-karaoke

FILM

Monsturd and Retardead Double Feature

San Francisco schlockmeisters Rick Popko and Dan West are hard at work on a brand-new bad-taste should-be classic (the concept in five words or less: Satanists in wine country). But there'll be no shortage of fake blood and goofy jokes at a night highlighting their previous efforts: 2008's lower-education zombie epic *Retardead*, and their greatest contribution to cinema to date, 2003's *Monsturd*. The prison escapee-turned-monster is made of poop, people! POOP! You can't run! You can't hide! You can't even take a shit in peace! Thrillville's Will the Thrill

oversees the fecal festivities, while Meshugga Beach Party strums live surf jams. **(Cheryl Eddy)**

7:30 p.m., \$10
Four Star
2200 Clement, SF
(415) 666-3488
www.thrillville.net

MUSIC

Groove Armada

London-based electronic smoothies Groove Armada live on the same knife's edge of popular dance music favored by mega-acts like Crystal Method and Sasha and Digweed. Underground snobs (ahem) love to hate them because, while the music of these go-to stadium-fillers can evoke moody atmospherics and fractured hipbones in equal measure, it never quite pushes into intellectually interesting territory. Plus, like, my mom's really into them. But we also hate to love them — no matter how many forests of Glo-sticks we have to mow down, we'll still try to make it to the speakers at their live shows. The new *Black Light* (OM) has shaky vocal moments, but the beat keeps knockin'. Wear your shades to the Fillmore, though, because the light show's the real star. **(Marke B.)**

8 p.m. (also Fri/19), \$30
The Fillmore
1805 Geary, SF

(415) 346-6000
www.livenation.com

FRIDAY MARCH 19

MUSIC

"Zigabooaloo:

A Celebration of Legendary Funk Drummer Zigaboo Modeliste with an All Star New Orleans Funk Revue"

Zigaboo Modeliste, best known from his work with the Meters, is one of the best drummers and percussionists in the American funk scene. He's in the Bay for a three-night run, joined by New Orleans natives Dr. John (keys), Nicholas Payton (trumpet), Donald Harrison (sax) and others for an all-star funk revue. A prolific songwriter as well, Ziggy has written more than 200 songs. The "godfather of groove," his music has been featured in movies like 1997's *Jackie Brown* and has been sampled by Queen Latifah, Run DMC, NWA, Ice Cube, and other hip-hop icons. **(Lilan Kane)**

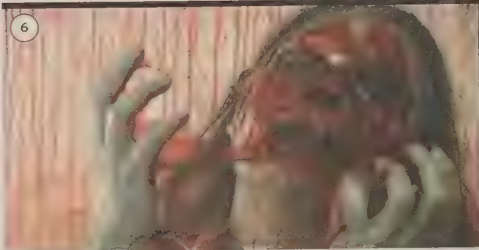
8 and 10 p.m. (also Sun/21, 2 and 7 p.m.), \$5-\$35
Yoshi's
510 Embarcadero West, Oakl.
(510) 238-9200
www.yoshis.com

MUSIC

Harlem Gospel Choir

The beat of the tambourine,

Perhaps his slippery white whale of a style is finally within reach.



uplifting cries of the soprano section, and echoing reverberations of the organ merge to create the colossal sound that is gospel music. From the historically rich jazz neighborhood in New York, the world-renowned Harlem Gospel Choir brings soul-enriching hymns to the Jewish Community Center. Be prepared to spend the evening clapping your hands and stomping your feet. **(Brown)**

8 p.m., \$45
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco
3200 California, SF
(415) 292-1200
www.jccsf.org

MUSIC

Sunshine Anderson
Under the management of Macy Gray, Sunshine Anderson debuted with her 2001 album *Your Woman* (Atlantic Records). Her hit single "Heard It All Before" reached No. 3 on the R&B charts. With songs everyone can relate to and a husky, sexy voice everyone wants to hear, Sunshine now records and performs with Matthew Knowles' label. Tonight she's joined by East Bay soul singers FEM! and Viveca Hawkins. Three voices in one night — treat yourself to a triple threat. **(Kane)**

9 p.m., \$16,
Shattuck Down Low

2284 Shattuck, Berk.
(510) 705-1151
www.shattuckdownload.com

MUSIC

Mandolin Magic with Avi Avital
Oh, the mandolin, a miniature relative of the guitar. I've always admired musicians who could master playing chords on such a small neck while plucking on the tiny strings, and Avi Avital is no exception. The multifaceted Israeli musician attended Padua Conservatory. Tonight he plays live renditions of Bach's *Concerto in A Minor*, Golijov's "Last Round," and Beethoven's *Andante con Variazioni*, accompanied by a double string quartet. **(Brown)**

8 p.m., free
Herbst Theatre
401 Van Ness, SF
(415) 248-1640
www.sfcchamberorchestra.org

SATURDAY MARCH 20

EVENT

Ub Iwerks
Before he was 007, Sean Connery played a small-town Irishman in the 1959 Disney favorite *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*. The role helped get the attention of Bond producers, but the real star of the movie was the Nodal Point Camera. By creating the correct scale



between actors portraying humans and short, mythical creatures, the new technology helped give life to the film's story of an old man's run-ins with the king of the leprechauns. This afternoon, Don Iwerks discusses how his father, the legendary Ub Iwerks (who also helped animate the first Mickey Mouse cartoons and contributed to special effects for Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 *The Birds*) created the camera. **(McCourt)**

3 p.m., \$10
Walt Disney Family Museum Theater
104 Montgomery, SF
(415) 345-6800
www.waltdisney.org

DANCE

Chitresh Das Dance Company
Dancers in their 30s often know that a career change is imminent. So what is 65-year-old Chitresh Das doing dancing with Jason Samuels Smith, who is more than 30 years his junior? Setting the floorboards afire with percussive dancing that is virtuosic. Just to keep it "simple," two of the four feet on stage are barefoot, with 25 pounds of bells attached to them. If you haven't seen these two master practitioners — kathak for Das, tap for Smith — this is the time. The show has an early curtain because a gala dinner follows (separate tickets required). **(Felciano)**

6 p.m., \$35-\$75
Palace of Fine Arts
3601 Lyon, SF
(415) 392-4400
www.cityboxoffice.com

MONDAY MARCH 22

MUSIC

Monday Soul Series presents Jamillions

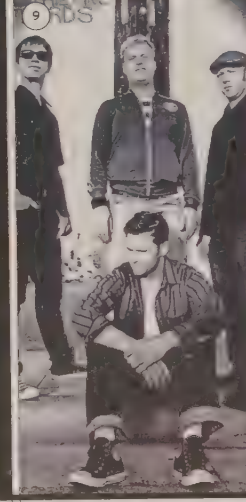
You may have heard Jamillions on Wild 94.9 or 106 KMEL or seen his name on the back of someone's album — the man has recorded with major players including Traxamillion, Too Short, and Clyde Carson. With either a microphone or a pen in his hand, he breaks the current mold in a world of auto-tuning and ghostwriting. He's busy recording his debut album and is ready to give a little live preview. Gracious, talented, and driven, Jamillions just might find himself in the same ranks as Ne-Yo and Usher one day. **(Kane)**

10 p.m., free
Air Lounge
492 Ninth Street, Oakl.
(510) 444-2377
www.airoakland.com

TUESDAY MARCH 23

MUSIC

Imelda May
Mainstream American audi-



(1) Avi Avital (see Fri/19); (2) cover of Jamillions' "Uh Huh" (see Mon/22); (3) Chitresh Das (see Sat/20); (4) Bassekou Kouyate (see Thurs/18); (5) Sunshine Anderson (see Fri/19); (6) still from *Retardead* (see Thurs/18); (7) Harlem Gospel Choir (see Fri/19); (8) Imelda May (see Tues/23); (9) Filthy Thieving Bastards (see Wed/17)

AVI AVITAL PHOTO BY GUY HECHT

ences got their first glimpse of Irish chanteuse Imelda May at this year's Grammy Awards, where she sang with Jeff Beck in tribute to the late Les Paul. But the dervish from Dublin has been rocking stages for more than a decade in the U.K.. Taking the sounds of traditional rockabilly and giving them an injection of her own infectious energy and style, May can make listeners swoon at a ballad like "Falling In Love With You Again" or jump to attention on searing rockers like "Johnny Got A Boom Boom." She's opening for Jamie Cullum, but you can be sure the next time she's state-side she'll be the well-deserving headliner. **(McCourt)**

8 p.m., \$35
Fillmore
1805 Geary, SF
(415) 371-5500
www.thefillmore.com

MUSIC

Devendra Banhart and the Grogs

The first time I saw Devendra Banhart perform, he refused to begin playing until someone in the audience supplied him with drugs. It's difficult to say how much he was playing into his role as the forerunner of "freak-folk," but both his musical and social experiments indicate that he is unpredictable. Ridiculously prolific and

sometimes experimental to a fault, Banhart has spent the last decade mining psychedelic pop, Laurel Canyon folk balladry and R&B, often singing in Spanish. On his Warner Bros. debut *What Will Be*, his sound remains as schizophrenic as ever but shows a bit more restraint. Perhaps the slippery white whale of a style Banhart's been seeking all these years is finally within reach. **(Peter Galvin)**

With Dorothy and the Originals
8 p.m., \$25
Warfield Theatre
982 Market, SF
(415) 775-7722
www.thewarfieldtheatre.com

The Guardian listings deadline is two weeks prior to our Wednesday publication date. To submit an item for consideration, please include the title of the event, a brief description of the event, date, time, venue, name, street address (listing cross streets only isn't sufficient), city, telephone number readers can call for more information, telephone number for media, and admission costs. Send information to Listings, The Guardian Building, 135 Mississippi St., SF, CA 94107; fax to (415) 487-2506; or e-mail (paste press release into e-mail body — no text attachments, please) to listings@sfbg.com. We cannot guarantee the return of photos, but enclosing an SASE helps. Digital photos may be submitted in jpeg format; the image must be at least 240 dpi and four inches by six inches in size. We regret we cannot accept listings over the phone.

arts + culture

Yiyun Li, author of *The Vagrants* and *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*: "I feel much more like myself when I write in English, which is to say English is really my first language in creating and thinking. In a way I do censor myself less."



From Beijing to Oakland

Yiyun Li explores the language of creation and the memory of violence

By Juliette Tang
arts@sfbg.com

LIT In 2005, after dropping out of a PhD program in immunology, Chinese writer Yiyun Li debuted her first book of fiction, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*. A collection of stories exploring the aftershock of the Cultural Revolution on mainland and overseas Chinese, it won the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, PEN/Hemingway Award, Guardian First Book Award, and California Book Award. Li's story "Immortality" won the Paris Review Plimpton Prize.

Afterward, Li's green card application was rejected by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services — twice. Her "extraordinary ability" as an artist (Title 8, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 204.5) could not be proven until she won, on top of those acco-

lades, a Pulitzer Prize.

Fortunately for the status of fiction in America, Li's extraordinary ability was finally recognized in 2007, 11 years after her arrival to the United States. In a journey that has taken her from Beijing to Iowa, Li now resides in Oakland with her family. Li left China in 1996 to pursue a doctorate in immunology at the University of Iowa. Living in China, she had no interest in writing fiction, and her natural affinity and aptitude for telling stories in English took her by surprise. Her second language in speaking, she discovered, was really a "first language in creating and thinking."

Li has a scientist's eye toward precision and a gifted storyteller's ability to extract meaning from the mad fracas of human circumstance. Last year, she published a well-received first novel called *The Vagrants*. Set in China during 1979, in a fictional provincial city called Muddy River, the novel

provides an unflinching view into the era's brutality and violence. The novel also reveals, carefully and without sentiment, the unexpected moments of transcendence that result when love, empathy, and human emotions bloom in the harshest of environments.

Li spoke with the SFBG about *The Vagrants*, released in paperback by Random House a few weeks ago.

SFBG You write in English, which you learned as an adult. Does this have to do with any innate differences linguistic between English and Chinese? Does it have anything to do with your associations with China?

YIYUN LI I wasn't trained as a writer in China, and even though I widely read Chinese literature when I was in China, I never had the urge to write in Chinese until I came to America, picked up English, and felt it a natural way to express myself. I think it is a more personal decision than I may

have indicated, though honestly I myself sometimes feel mystified by this switch of languages too. I feel much more like myself when I write in English, which is to say English is really my first language in creating and thinking. In a way I do censor myself less when I write in English — again, that censoring is not from others, but from myself.

SFBG Do you think in Chinese?

YL I no longer think in Chinese. Of course as my mother tongue, Chinese is still used in my everyday life — I still count and do my math in Chinese, but when I think about literature, art and philosophy I think in English.

SFBG As an international student, your decision to forgo a promising medical career and become a writer was extremely brave. During the process of writing your first book, did you experience great anxiety or doubt? Were you ever tempted to give up and go back to medicine?

YL I didn't feel self-doubt — I

think by the time I gave up my immunology career, I was certain I wouldn't go back. There was a certain level of anxiety but I would say at the time it was minimal. I probably just lived with a tunnel vision and all I thought about was to write, and write well. I was certain that I needed some time to improve myself, so it did not occur to me to give up.

SFBG When you write, do you find you draw any lessons from your experiences studying medicine?

YL Medical knowledge, like any kind of knowledge, is helpful and useful for a fiction writer. I think my training perhaps helps me look at the world and its many violences without being sentimental.

SFBG In *The Vagrants*, even small children in Muddy River are completely unmoved by public executions. This strikes me as devastating and true. My mother told me that when she was growing up in China during the early 1970s, she saw a man bleed to death on the side

of the road. The real horror of the experience didn't dawn on her until decades later. You were seven years old in 1979, the year in which *The Vagrants* takes place. Writing about violence from the perspective of children, do you recall events from your own childhood in China?

YF Your mother's experience was quite close to my own experience, and indeed for most children, empathy and sympathy come not naturally, but with some help from grownups and education. When violence is prevalent, as one sometimes finds in life, not only children but adults too stop questioning the injustice. I did draw from my own memories of the time, but like your mother, I had to look back as a different person to understand the tie.

SFBG Have you gone back to China since you've left? How are you received?

YF Yes, I have been back visiting. I keep a very low profile when I visit China, so there is not much trouble for me.

SFBG You've mentioned that your biggest literary influence is William Trevor. You've named Chekhov, Tolstoy, and Greene as influences, too. Do you draw any influences from Chinese literature?

YF My favorite Chinese author — Shen Congwen — influenced me a lot, not in the way of how he wrote stories and how he used language but how he looked at the world as a storyteller.

SFBG Speaking of Chinese novels, some of your characters in *The Vagrants*, like Teacher Gu, are quite literary. I enjoyed that Kai and Jialin hold their clandestine meetings in the library. I also liked that Jialin's mother steals books for him from the shelves she's supposed to guard. What books are these characters reading? If you could pick a book for each Gu, Kai, and Jialin, what might be a book that affected the way each viewed the world at that time?

YF This is a great question. For Jialin and Kai, I imagine they would be reading *Gadfly*, a little-known novel in the West but a hugely popular novel in China (and Soviet Union) written by the Irish author Ethel Voynich. I also thought Jialin might be interested in reading French authors. For Teacher Gu, I would imagine he would read Tolstoy. **SFBG**

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PLUS DIS JUANITA MORE AND BUS STATION JOHN!

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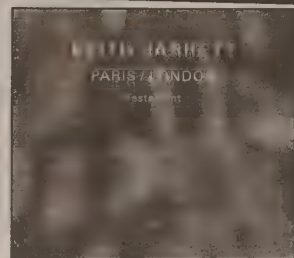
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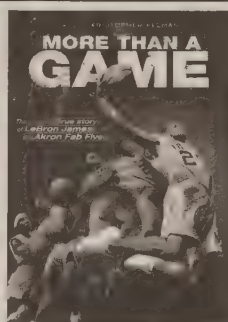


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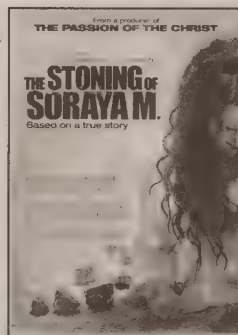
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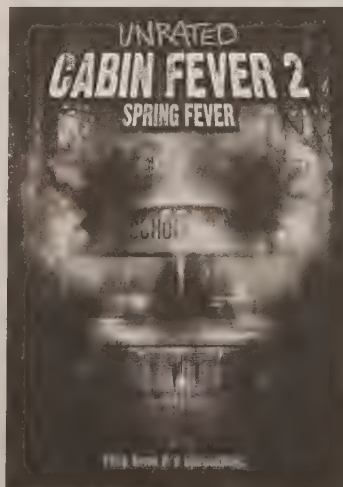
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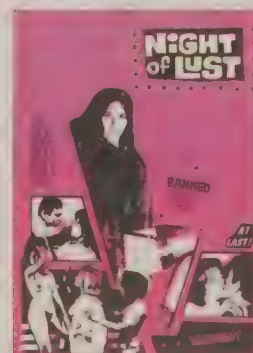
Breast intentions

CULT CINEMA The 2010 Academy Awards ceremony did indeed mark historic firsts. Oh, not just the fact that a woman finally won Best Director. I mean somebody (Alec Baldwin? Steve Martin? I forget) saying "vagina" live to a bazillion people worldwide, some of them no doubt way short of both voting age and bedtime. Of course you can say fuckwad, fuckhole, and fuckety fuckelstein on cable. But this was network, and the Oscars besides. How community standards do change.

Turn the clock back 50 years or so, and you couldn't even say "pregnant" — when Lucy Ricardo was "expecting" on *I Love Lucy*, no euphemism was quite delicate enough. Before audience-restrictive MPAA ratings arrived a few years later, big-screen movies had to be pretty circumspect too, no matter that fully clothed Jayne Mansfield was more obscenely suggestive than the plain old medical-grade v-word could ever be. (FYI, Best Use of the Term in a Porn Title: *Big Trouble in Little Vagina*.)

That was in the mainstream, where actual public nudity was as yet unthinkable. A few rungs down the cultural ladder, however, things were gradually loosening up. Art and smut conveniently blurred from the late 1940s onward, as certain European filmmakers (Ingmar Bergman among them) began pushing toward greater sexual frankness. This delighted U.S. grindhouse distributors, who wasted little time buying exploitable features, then cutting the offending hell out of them even as their ads promised shocking, adults-only content.

Such was the case with *Night of Lust*, a 1962 production by Casablanca-born French producer-director-scenarist Jose Bénazéraf. In 1965 American entrepreneur R. Lee Frost announced this feature, purportedly "BANNED all over the world!" could "at last be seen in the U.S. uncut, after three years in court!" He neglected to mention he'd trimmed nearly 20 minutes from it himself.



What remained in the barely-hour-long version playing the Red Vic this week was a lurid jumble that makes it difficult to figure out Bénazéraf's original intentions, let alone why some then considered him an important Nouvelle Vague figure. (Critics abandoned him once he went into straight-up porn.) But with its continuity gaps, moralizing narrator, atrocious dubbed dialogue, and positively Freudian camera fixation on myriad bare breasts, this supposedly true crime story torn from "Interpol File 218" is campy fun, at least.

This isn't the Paris of lovers, but Sicilians vs. Frogs fighting over millions in heroin, plus strippers, stranglers, kidnappings, and catfights. Not adding any romance either is an original free-jazz-combo score by no less than Chet Baker — his trumpet playing sometimes mimed by a musically inclined mob boss — who was then living his own European heroin crime saga. It would get him imprisoned in Italy, then deported from England and Germany. Whether those events too were sprinkled with random sightings of jiggling mammaries, we'll never know. (Dennis Harvey)

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L.A. sunshine brought dark themes to the music of High Places — Rob Barber and Mary Pearson — which manages to be meditative while making your body move.

Light into darkness

Now on the West Coast, High Places charts new spaces

By Michelle Broder Van Dyke
arts@sfbg.com

MUSIC High Places' upcoming release *High Places vs. Mankind* (Thrill Jockey) opens with the slow-tempered "The Longest Shadow." The chorus

offers a supine first-person perspective of the sun's effect on the earth at dusk. The first verse focuses on letting love in, but by the second verse Mary Pearson's lyrics narrate the end of a relationship, which includes that universal nostalgia (a.k.a. confusion) of not really knowing why a relationship terminates, and includes the ritual stages of longing, wondering, and finally, remembering.

High Places' music is designed to be lost in; it infiltrates and instigates meditation, but it also manages to keep the listener constantly moving. That's how good the beat is as it weaves in and out of Pearson's vocals. When the second track "On Giving Up" begins, it's hard to determine if Pearson's extending the last poem, and is talking about the actual breakup night, or if she's talking about quitting cigarettes, booze, or some addiction, as she sings: "It's all because I feel everything that's gone. It's all gone. Well, tonight is going to

be the night." But that ambivalence is part of the charm, allowing the listener to relate and reflect.

Pearson and Rob Barber are High Places. The pair explored the natural world on the 2008 compilation *03/07-09/07*, and on their self-titled album from the same year (both on Thrill Jockey). But on *High Places vs. Mankind*, there is a clear shift toward "humanity," as Pearson defines it, "for lack of a better word."

Weather — the hot, the cold — as well as spatial relationships, and differences, have a large impact on how we as humans live and operate. The band moved from New York to Los Angeles roughly a year ago. "We really had no good reason to, other than the weather," Barber says when I ask him over the phone why they decided to move. L.A. literally exists because it averages 320 sunny days a year, which made it the ideal location to film, and thus Hollywood emerged. After settling down in L.A. and taking a pause from touring, the duo suddenly had a great deal more space and time. They began writing and recording. But curiously, the warmth, space, and time led to icier sounds and darker themes in its new recording.

Pearson explains that High Places' music made in New York

"is based on escapism and trying to create our ideal environment. But because it's so beautiful in L.A. all the time, we don't need to talk about that stuff quite as much." This allowed the band to explore new ideas.

On *High Places vs. Mankind*, the blissed-out melodies and undeniable dance rhythms along with the complex layering and tidbits of dub are still apparent. But there is more: guitars sounding like guitars, unlike before, when they could've been mistaken for steel drums or sitars. And Pearson's vocals are less affected, allowing them to be vividly heard.

The back of High Places' self-titled release reads: "recorded at home by High Places." In New York, the band/best friends lived together. "I think that made us write every note together," says Pearson. In L.A., where they no longer share an apartment, they've taken a different approach. The pair discovered that they desired different types of workspaces. "I would work at home, and she would work in an outside studio," Barber explains. "We'd meet up and smash it all together. We'd go back and forth with it, responding to each other like call-and-response."

The change in sound is cooler at times, but it is also more direct in its message. "It was much more based on human relationships, and life and death," says Pearson. The album is dark and light at the same time — tragic contemplations are matched with stretched-out synths, as well as those bouncing beats and rhythmic hooks High Places has utilized in the past to keep things airy. The music makes you pause, get lost, question your own mortality, think about your last heartache, and when the daze is over, you feel one step closer to the infinite.

High Places' forthcoming show will add one more twinge in its exploration of human relationships by including Pearson's sister Laura on vocals for the first time, and she'll continue on most of the U.S. tour. Pearson explains that she and her sister have been singing together informally all their lives — "Karaoke," interrupts Barber — and that HP has wanted to include her on tour for a long time now. **SFBG**

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So you think you can choreograph?

"Spring Forward: Choreographer's Showcase 2010" spotlights a range of new works

By Rita Felciano
arts@sfbg.com

DANCE On March 11, at the eighth Dance Discourse Project — an ongoing series of artist-driven discussions sponsored by CounterPULSE and

Dancers' Group — the topic was "Dance in Pop Culture." Reality shows like *So You Think You Can Dance?* and *Dancing With the Stars* have raised questions about their effect on theater-based dance. Most participants agreed that these media-driven programs have created at least one beneficial change. For reasons cultural and historic, large sections of the population still think of dance as something unknown and unfamiliar. The popularity of these programs — controversial as they are in terms of artistic quality — have made dance more accessible and democratized the art.

The night after that discussion, democratization of a different type took place in the Mission. It was time for another entry in Dance Mission Theater's long-running "Choreographer's Showcase" series. Twice a year a cattle call goes out to dancers in the Bay Area. It's not for a chance to audition or submit a proposal to be considered by experts. Rather, it's a wide-open process: you have something you want to show, let 'em know — first come, first served.

The result is a freewheeling two hours of dance, with usually about 12 soloists and groups. They range from the barely competent to the highly professional. The house is packed with family and friends who come to cheer their favorites and are exposed to a wide spectrum of theatrical dance. This latest show was no different.

Three soloists stood out. Herve Kayos Makaya's *La Lutte Continue*, performed by the choreographer, showed a superb dancer dragging two heavy burlap bags before bursting into an explosive African and Western vocabulary mix of leaping feet and racing arms. Currently a



Kat Worthington of Copious Dance Theater challenges the law of gravity.

PHOTO BY KEYVAN BEHPOUR

work in progress, the finished *Lutte* is something to look forward to at the CubaCaribe Festival in late April. *First Creation* had choreographer-dancer Alison Hammond scoot around the floor, shaking a tambourine. Kneeling on the floor, flowing hair obscuring her head, she deployed neck muscles the size of a prizefighter into a rollicking earthquake before sending her long legs into crotch-exposing propeller rotations. Surely this was one of the oddest performances seen on that stage. Liz Brent's masked *that person you meet* was so short it was over before you noticed it. Though tentative, the idea of using hands as a primary expressive tool warrants further exploration.

I have a soft spot for the large Strong Pulse Crew, Kirstin E. Williams' hip-hop student group from City College. For some of the dancers, it's a chance to shine; for others, it's a chance to try, and there is room here for all. *Bringin' It Back Remix* featured a welcome dream section in which the dancers choreographed their own parts. Meanwhile,

Kimberly B. Valmore teaches college students using a ballet-based eclectic vocabulary. The imagistic *Answer the Call*, with a central couple surrounded by an ensemble moved with a pulsating febrile intensity, nicely balanced stasis against full-force propulsion. Some of Valmore's dancers have professional potential. Silvana Sousa's samba choreography for *Syncope of Brazil* highlighted the difference between dancers and performers. Except for the three soloists, these samba dancers were too self-consciously awkward to bring to their performance that all-important ingredient called projection.

Two companies managed to create compelling emotional atmospheres. Lee Parmino and Janey Madamba's *Awakening* made good use of a small corps in a piece that suggested disruption and healing of a relationship. There was something vaguely ominous in Hilary Palanza's bent-over and head-butting duets *A Perplexing and Brief Study of My Loss*. She was shattered by more the score's sounds of breaking glass. **SFBG**

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Broken promises

Petition and Promised Lands offer different takes on human rights

By Max Goldberg
arts@sfbg.com

FILM Zhao Liang's *Petition* is an audacious documentary, making up for whatever it lacks in formal innovation with an extraordinary level of commitment and narrative insight. Using a lightweight digital camera to enter repressed zones of Chinese society, both in the guts of bureaucracy and at its most wretched margins, Zhao spent a decade tracking the bitter lives of citizens who travel to Beijing to petition the central government for a fair hearing. Once there, they face malicious neglect and interminable waiting. The petitioners live on the street or crammed into small hotels, in constant fear of "retrievers" from their home provinces. The government estimates local corruption statistics by the numbers of complaints, so there's incentive for these thugs to prevent dissenters from ever reaching the front of the line.

Forget the critic's shorthand of "Dickensian" or "Kafkaesque." Franz Fanon is a closer match for Zhao's radical engagement, but the point is that *Petition*'s testimonies are not positioned for literary identification. "Our city has millions of people," a retriever threatens a petitioner, unaware that he's on camera, "We don't care if one disappears." The film does. Zhao's rage is made clear without recourse to platitudes. More important, *Petition*'s chorus of suffering never congeals into an undifferentiated mass; we never forget that this purgatory is finally someone's life.

Zhao's hidden camera generates damning evidence, but the documentarian's most effective tool is time. Ten years is a long enough span to realize aging, a necessary reference point for *Petition*'s trail of arrests and relocations — with each, the prospect of justice ever more remote. When the petitioners' tents are razed for an Olympic park, their slow grind is directly juxtaposed with the country's rapid development, and the common murmurs of uprising come to seem comprehen-

sible, perhaps even inevitable.

Over her decades as the engaged American intellectual par excellence, Susan Sontag occasionally received flack for projecting her own quest for moral seriousness on other peoples' struggles. *Promised Lands* (1974), one of four films she made and the only documentary, is not so well known as "Trip to Hanoi" or her productions of Beckett in Sarajevo, but it does nonetheless

say it can only end tragically, since both sides are "right." Both avoid any serious talk of political realities. For her part, Sontag presses a densely collaged soundtrack (shades of Godard and Emile de Antonio) over voyeuristic, estranged views of Jews at the Wailing Wall, encroaching consumer capitalism (*Promised Lands*' most significant insight), Hasids roaming the desert streets, and blackened corpses in the dunes.

The real problem with *Promised Lands* isn't its lack of Palestinian voices — it's that Sontag never rises to the challenge of describing what it means to make this film as an American. Given what she would later write in *On Photography*, it's curious that she could be so blasé



Petition explores what happens to government protesters in Beijing. Spoiler: it ain't pleasant. | PHOTO COURTESY OF ZHAO LIANG

issue from this less appealing side of her intellect. Unlike *Petition*'s effortful humility, *Promised Lands* has the tokenizing insouciance of a tourist's slideshow. The 16mm film was cobbled together in the immediate aftermath of the Six Day War, with strident Zionist Yuval Ne'eman and leftist intellectual Yoram Kaniuk serving as the alpha and omega of the Israeli soul.

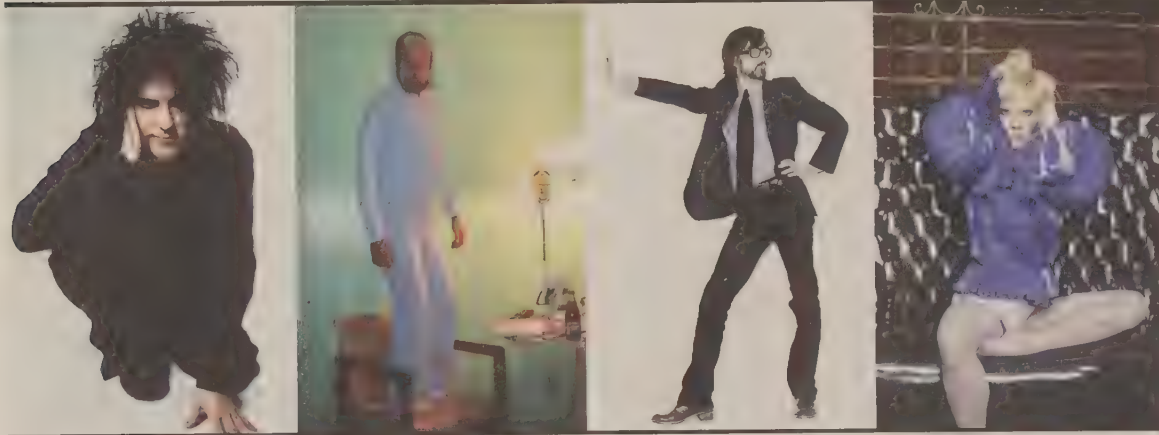
Their rhetorical styles are opposed, though the conclusions they draw are equally foregone — for Ne'eman, Israel will follow Spain in ousting the Arabs (he says this without a trace of irony, the Inquisition notwithstanding), while for Kaniuk it is enough to

here about wielding the camera as a mystifying poetic-ethnographic instrument. The film ends with the sound of an unseen woman's cries, her suffering wholly detached from its cause and context. One can't escape the sense that Sontag was enamored by a place where moral issues were right on the surface, but that she never solidified this abstract "interest." Our loss. **SFBG**

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Seven years of Sonic Reducer have brought Robert Smith sounding off about disposable pop heroes, Will Oldham discussing musical emotion, Jarvis Cocker revealing the whiteness of the blues, and Lady Gaga declaring her commitment to the art of being flawless.



Peace-out

By Kimberly Chun
kimberly@sfbg.com

SONIC REDUCER Who would have thought that Sonic Reducer would rattle on for so long — unreduced, unredacted, Sonic even while covering Mr. Winkle or *Mundane Journeys*. It's been more than seven years since Cheetah Chrome gave me the casual A-OK to borrow the name of his song, and now the end is nigh: this is the final SR in the *Guardian*, but what a deliciously lengthy, rich, overwhelming run it has had.

Scanning the first Jan. 7, 2003, column — chock-full of New Year's Eve tidbits concerning one of Dengue Fever's first shows in SF, Bud E. Luv's turn as the *Ozzy* and Sharon Osbourne's NYE attraction (playing big band versions of "Iron Man," natch, amid strippers and absurdly outsized sex toys), and an evening out to the Coachwhips/Pink and Brown-reunion house party in a South Van Ness basement, trapped by a moat of mud, buffeted by revelers, and besieged by circuit-breaking blackouts. Lo, there was also scandalous news of rumored onstage fellatio at a Tigerbeat6 showcase and an update on Kimo's efforts to halt the sonic seepage at its ear-bleed noise shows.

The early '00s in SF were a giddy, madly experimental, and hyperfertile period for local music — a delicious convergence of imagi-

nations cocked and loaded by the dot-com gold rush, exploded with the blizzard of pink slips and the onset of plentiful time and energy, and the excitement of so many ripe minds coming together — oof — at once, if from widely divergent corners of the cultural landscape: how else to explain the peaceful coexistence of Joanna Newsom and Caroliner, Deerhoof and Comets on Fire, Soft Pink Truth and Hunx and His Punx, Vetiver and Turf Talk, the Morning Benders and the Lovemakers, the Oh Sees and every other band John Dwyer has been involved in, in this fair city?

Perhaps one day I'll boil down these 350-plus columns — snipes, jests, always-in-good-fun jabs, and all — and come up with a rough sketch of this equally rough and rewarding zero-hour decade's blurry contours. In the meantime, glancing hazily back over past columns, I unearthed a few highlights — from lowlifes or bright lights:

- Mark Pauline of Survival Research Laboratories on not performing in Europe, 2003: "We were good enough to cause national alerts and bad international events, so we never got asked back. Again, good work."
- eXtreme Elvis on SF, 2003: "Too much of culture that surrounds San Francisco has to do with that idea of no spectators. No spectators means everyone's a DJ, everyone plays didgeridoo, everyone has a band, everyone is a spoken-word artist. There's a kind of culture of narcissism — guilty as charged, right?"

- Inca Ore's Eva Saclens on touring, 2006: "When you break through, it's like being in another world. Sometimes I'll try to push an explosion or try to lose my mind, and if you do that on a nightly basis, it's unreliable and it's also abusive. You're pushing your emotions in an athletic way, almost."

- Nick Cave on Grinderman, 2007: "An overriding theme of mine is, I guess, a man and a woman against the world. But for this record, the woman seems to be down in the street, engaged in life, and the man is kind of left on his own, with, um, y'know, a tube of complimentary shampoo and a sock."
- The Cure's Robert Smith on dumb pop, 2007: "I'm saying that most good pop singles are stupid — otherwise they're not good pop singles. I'm from an age when disposable wasn't necessarily a bad thing."
- Joe Boyd on music book signings, 2007: "I can tell you what the queue looks like. There's a lot of beards. There's a lot of bald pates. There's a lot of gray hair, and every once in a while there's a 20-something woman in the queue, and then you kind of make sure your hair is combed straight. Then she comes up to the head of the queue and says, 'Will you please sign it "To Peter"? It's for my father for his 60th birthday.'"
- Lady Gaga on pop perfection, 2008: "If it isn't flawless, I gotta work myself up to where it is — otherwise I'm just another pop chick with blonde hair."

- Will Oldham on music, 2008: "You can find in music just about any ideal emotional landscape you crave, whether it's angst or rebellion or celebration or union or dissolution. It's all there, and none of it's going to call you back or text you at four o'clock in the morning or blame you for anything you did or didn't do or slap you with a paternity suit."
- Six Organs of Admittance's Ben Chasny on "Ewok Song," 2009: "I know it by heart, and it's the precursor to all these kids with wizard hats. It all comes down to the Ewoks singing around the fire. Akron/Family ain't got nothing on the Ewoks, man."
- Laurent Brancowitz of Phoenix on his old Daft Punk bandmates, 2009: "They decided to go to a lot of rave parties, and I didn't, because I didn't like the nightclub life. I'm a bit of a snob about it — I find it very vulgar."
- Jarvis Cocker on his song "Caucasian Blues," 2009: "I was interested in how blues music has gone from the music of protest, of the oppressed, to the blandest, safest music for white people to listen to in bars."

Oh, but that was then — and I loathe nostalgia, if that isn't already clear from the past seven years of cranky natterings and screams at the sky against boring, snorey Sha Na Na-style regurgitations. And this is now. Look for more from me in these and other pages, but never look back in regret. **SFBG**

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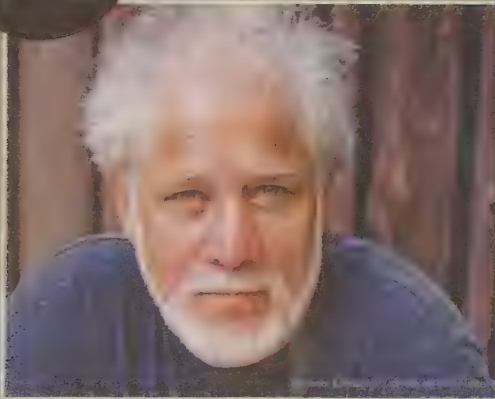
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"Music is a pure form of psychiatry," says Herman Eberitzsch Jr. III, seen here during his early-1970s recording heyday. "It has two potentials: it either incites you to create, or it soothes the savage beast."

A lost San Francisco saga

Rediscovering the music of Herman Eberitzsch Jr. III

By Michael Krimper
arts@sfbg.com

MUSIC "There are great artists and musicians who will never be discovered," says Herman Eberitzsch Jr. III. "That's the way it is," he reasons.

"There's only so much room at the top."

That's why you've most likely never heard of Eberitzsch (pronounced "eh-bur-itch") despite his remarkable music talent. He has a name straight out of a gothic fairy tale—far from the iconic, slick-sounding syllables associated with San Francisco's psychedelic soul renaissance during the late 1960s and '70s. Yet his recordings hold up to the best of them. "We had a strong conviction that we were the next big thing," Eberitzsch says. "But we weren't."

Each generation harbors a certain aesthetic mood that mutates

and evolves under the prescient vision of a limited number of innovators. Their fresh styles, resonant at first, then become formulated and stagnant, disseminated in the norm. We then await the next genius, or at least a movement of collective creativity, to shake things up. But what attunes us to one artistic strand, pregnant with a world of open-ended meaning and feeling, rather than another with just as much potential richness? How do we come to discern between the vanguard and the wayward? And what if we miss something in the process?

Eberitzsch's unlikely story might just read like a rediscovery of what we overlooked. He recorded hours of bluesy soul fueled by free-form jazz throughout the '70s that never saw commercial release. He arranged, wrote, sang, and funkified the keys on dozens of songs with mainstays of Santana's circuit (Coke Escovedo, Linda Tillery), Lee Oskar of War, and Sly Stone's

drummer, Greg Errico, among many others. Most of the musicians who recorded on Eberitzsch's own arrangements were, by and large, no-namers, yet it's their music which now stands out.

Eberitzsch's songs leap and wander. They gracefully move the spirit while grounding the body in rich, earthy grooves. They are a naive and inspiringly audacious attempt at channeling the sort of raw expression that challenges, mesmerizes, fights, and loves. In the midst of so much experimental and groundbreaking sound, Eberitzsch's music either missed the ears of the right A&R rep or was just not the right kind of *different*.

A CHANCE REDISCOVERY

Now Eberitzsch is sitting across from me in a café near his former Potrero district home, excited to tell his story. He greets me as Allen Ginsberg (my look-alike visage intact, masked in dark beard and

glasses), and I feign appreciation for the well-meaning reference, knowing that although Ginsberg had quite a poetic sharpness, he wasn't the best-looking fellow. But Eberitzsch's generous charm and earnest happiness with the course his life has taken, despite the disappointments, quickly win me over. Waves of amiable energy overtake the slightly weathered rasp in his voice. A youthful, idealistic Eberitzsch naturally emerges in the course of minutes. In a way, he's been waiting for this interview for 40 years.

"Atlantic told me, 'We don't hear it at this time,'" Eberitzsch says, highlighting the elusive way a record company executive might elongate *time*, stretching the curt word like a worn rubber band. "But when you invest your life and your heart and soul into a project of your own creation, your own little children of songs, you don't throw them away. You don't send them down the River Styx," he says, laughing. "So I put 'em in the basement."

That's where record collector Daniel Borine mistakenly found the two-inch apex tapes, 35 years later, while doing photo research for a reissue project on lost Bay Area modern soul. What those tapes hid — a dusty time capsule of relentless insight and vigor — amazed Borine. In a move away from the prideful hoarding that typically characterizes collectors, Borine wanted to share the tapes with a larger audience and finally do justice to Eberitzsch's music. He pursued the new and quickly growing business of recorded music archaeology and preservation, an endeavor that mirrors what so many archivists have done already for literature, film, and visual art. Borine had the tapes mastered and organized the tracks into coherent volumes. He plans to put out four full-length records of Eberitzsch's brilliant efforts, titled the *HE3 Project*, over the coming years on his own upstart Family Groove Records.

The first chapter of the compilation is set for release on March 30. It focuses on Eberitzsch's trailblazing efforts from three distinct recording sessions between 1971 and 1974. These recordings capture Eberitzsch's far-reaching artistry — a grounded and soulful angle on space-jazz psychedelia, informed as much by Weather Report as by Robert Johnson. This is the story of the man behind the *HE3 Project*.

ORIGINS OF A WOULD-BE TRAILBLAZER

Herman Eberitzsch Jr. III was born in San Francisco's colorful Portola neighborhood in 1947. He grew up in a German household, where he learned to play the classical composers — Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms — at a young age. But somewhere along the way Eberitzsch caught the funk and couldn't let go. "In my room I listened to James Brown," he recalls. "When I grooved and played the boogie, I had a powerful left foot that shook the ground. My left foot took down the house, so I eventually had to move out."

Eberitzsch conjured doo-wop on the corner with the young funky drummer Greg Errico, who lived down the street. He was enraptured by the blues in Oakland, danced to jazzy R&B grooves in San Francisco, and witnessed the emergence of a new psychedelic sound at the Fillmore and in the streets. Immersed in the Bay Area's magnetic music community, he naturally gravitated to the keys again. "I figured out how to play funky style clavinet and piano," Eberitzsch says. "They called me Funky Knuckles for short."

At 21, the freshly-dubbed Funky Knuckles joined a band with Boots Hughston called Sword and the Stone, and was booked by Bill Graham to perform at the Fillmore. The outfit transitioned into a quartet, Shane, with Santana's David Brown on bass. They hustled around the city making \$10 an hour and all the beer they could drink. The city bubbled over with an unparalleled creative force. The time was electric.

That same year — 1968 — Eberitzsch attended UC Berkeley to study psychiatry. But he quit after one semester to pursue music as a career, preferring the organic therapeutic powers of rhythm and melody to the structured treatment of question and answer. "Music is a much more pure form of psychiatry. It has two potentials: it either incites you to create, or it soothes the savage beast," he says. "I became a knowledgeable person of people through music." And cyclically, Eberitzsch's improvisational music erupted from kinetic relationships with people. **SFBG**

Part two of "A Lost San Francisco Saga" will appear in next week's *Guardian*.

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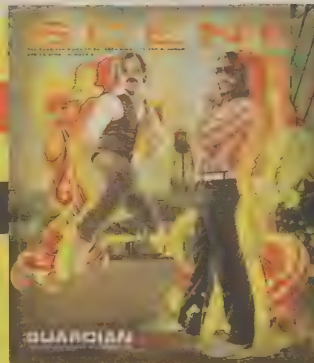
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A Man Who Hates Women (Peter Andersson) menaces punky, revenge-plotting Lisbeth (Noomi Rapace) in *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*.

Life after death

Swedish thriller *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* nearly lives up to its juicy back story

By Dennis Harvey
arts@sfbg.com

FILM By the time the first of Stieg Larsson's so-called "Millennium" books had been published anywhere, the series already had an unhappy ending. Its author planned 10 volumes total, but only finished three (plus some work on a fourth) before he died in 2004, none printed during his lifetime. The following year *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* became a Swedish, then eventually international sensation, its sequels following suit (though the English-translated third won't come out here till May).

The books are addicting, to say the least, and despite their essential crime-mystery-thriller nature, don't require putting your ear for writing of some literary value on sleep mode. As a result, there's a sense of frustration and injustice that Larsson isn't around to finish the job — no doubt exacerbated by the rumors that have milled around his premature demise. Like his male protagonist, he was a well-known muckracking journalist specializing in exposing right-wing scandals (especially racist and white-power organizations), so his massive heart attack at an apparently very

healthy age 50 naturally set the conspiracy theories rolling.

Then there's the matter of what happened to his fabulous, ever-escalating posthumous "Millennium" wealth: he never married a longtime partner, since his nonfiction work had drawn death threats and registration as a legal couple might have led violent extremists to their door. Unfortunately, that meant the one-time Trotskyist journal editor's fortune now flows directly to the conservative family he was largely estranged from. No doubt there will be eventual books and films about this real-life intrigue.

Meanwhile, the first of three adaptive features shot back-to-back has reached U.S. screens. (Sorry to say, yes, a Hollywood remake is already in the works — but let's hope that's years away.) Even at two-and-a-half hours, this *Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* by necessity must do some major truncating to pack in the essentials of a very long (600 pages), very plotty novel. Some significant relationships, back stories, subsidiary characters, most humor, and a lot of interesting detail are sacrificed; that paring down means some very disturbing violence (warning: the book's Swedish title was *Men Who Hate Women*) now looms much larger.

Still, all but the nitpickingest fans

will be fairly satisfied, while virgins will have the benefit of not knowing what's going to happen and getting scared accordingly. Soon facing jail after losing a libel suit brought against him by a shady corporate tycoon, leftist journalist Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist) gets a curious private offer to probe the disappearance 40 years earlier of a teenage girl. This entangles him with an eccentric wealthy family and their many closet skeletons (including Nazi sympathies) — as well as dragon-tattooed Lisbeth Salander (Noomi Rapace), androgynous loner, 24-year-old court ward, investigative researcher, and skillful hacker. She and Blomkvist eventually, uneasily team up to uproot what becomes a very nasty burial ground of old misdeeds.

Director Niels Arden Oplev (replaced on the two remaining films by Daniel Alfredson) and his scenarists do a workmanlike job — one more organizational than interpretive, a faithful transcription without much style or personality all its own. Mikael is straight man to Lisbeth's wild card, yet Nyqvist is still duller than need be; Jacob Groth's original score is downright cheesy at times. Nonetheless, Larsson's narrative engine kicks in early and hauls you right along to the depot, with nary a dull moment, nor an overly formulaic one. And to think he wrote the series as a sort of *hobby* (supposedly basing Lisbeth on Pippi Longstocking!), doubtless never imagining in death he'd quite possibly take a turn as the world's most popular author. **SFBG**

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO opens Fri/19 in Bay Area theaters.

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FO SHO: EASTENDERS' "FO/FAUX!" REVISITS, AND RIFFS ON,
DARIO FO'S WE WON'T PAY! WE WON'T PAY!

THEATER Leave it to a small and scrappy low-to-no-budget theater company to revive, at just the right time, Dario Fo's *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* Fo, Italy's esteemed

latter-day commedia dell'arte rabble-rouser — the first clown (who really is a clown) to win a Nobel Prize — crafted this gem in inspired response to another period of social-economic bullshit, the tumultuous mid-1970s, when Italy was suffering the brunt of the "stagflation" resulting from an oil-triggered worldwide downturn. Fo's 1974 farce draws on the real-life price rebellions and grocery-store riots carried out by Italy's (financially) desperate housewives for a very funny and pointed tale of revolutionary high jinx in the domestic sphere. And Eastenders' production, confidently helmed by artistic director Susan E. Evans, does it full justice. But the company doesn't stop there: the second half of the evening is devoted to one of two series of new shorts plays (running in repertory) that take the Fo piece and run with it, in varying contemporary directions.

We Won't Pay! takes up the bulk of the evening and remains the highlight, however, especially in Ron Jenkins' lively translation, delivered shrewdly by a strong cast with palpable personality and fine comic instincts. Its homey scenario connects the personal and political effortlessly, as a bright working-class housewife named Antonia (a deft and utterly charming Beatrice Basso) tries to hide from her morally upstanding husband, Giovanni (a droll pompous yet amiable Craig Dickerson), the groceries stolen in an exhilarating impromptu rebellion at the local market. Upright citizens and the coercive unjust hierarchies they protect are, of course, turned right on their head in the process. Even the policeman who shows up at the door (one of several supporting roles essayed with skill and aplomb by Matt Weimer) has had about enough of the whole system. By the end, an agitprop spirit takes over as Giovanni spouts what by now seems the most commonsensical thing — rebellion — as curtain and forth wall come down.

Often cleaving a little too closely to the original material, the playlets that follow in the second act can have the feel of an exercise rather than a fully wrought play of whatever length. But there are some small surprises to be found along the way. Actor Jeff Thompson strikes just the right pitch of whimsy and incipient political consciousness as he digests what has just gone before from the perspective of an incidental stage property, namely *A Frozen Rabbit Head*, in Gene Mocsy's playful monologue of the same name. And playwright Isaiah Dufort's *A Statement* shifts the opening scene between Antonia (Tristan Cunningham) and neighbor Margherita (Katarina-Fabic) just enough to give it a distinctly Bay Area edge, nicely realized by the actors under Amy K. Kilgard's direction. Less satisfying are the next two in the series, Jeff Thompson's *The Report*, which strains after meaning and humor in a beat cop's political awakening, and Scott Munson's *Safeway Encounter*, which begins promisingly but soon gets off-kilter, charging headlong down broadly absurd aisles of no return. In the end, it's a mixed bag, rabbit heads and all, but nourishing just the same. (Robert Avila)

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Eastenders' Lindsey B. Jones and Matt Weimer share a shocking moment in Dario Fo's *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!*
PHOTO BY CINTHIA JAMES

Credit due: UK disco edit and electro-funk hero Greg Wilson sails beyond the vinyl revival, reel-to-reel in tow.



Pool loops

By Marke B.
superego@sfbg.com

SUPER EGO "Don't you think that scratching records might annoy the people who spent a long time in the studio making them?"

I'm snickering at a jaw-droppingly antiquated — yet actually quite relevant — video from 1983 titled "1st UK DJ to Mix Live on TV." It features famous, fresh-faced turntablist Greg Wilson, gracefully fending off tin-eared questions from *Tube* program host Jools Holland while demonstrating to an antsy, angular-haired audience what this whole "mixing records" thing is about.

The scratching bit's a hoot because Wilson — who recently emerged from an 18-year retirement and will be performing at Triple Crown on Friday — isn't scratching at all. He's merely cueing up the record, a simple act that draws gasps. "Well, that's it, that's the danger," Wilson replies to Holland, poker-faced, his soft brown Afro unshaken. "But when a record's been played in the club for a long time, people get a bit fed up hearing it, and it's nice to hear it in a different way. And that's why I kind of ... play about with them a bit."

Wilson goes on to blow post-punk minds by phasing on two — *two* — tables at once. Then he takes it to a whole other level by revving up his trademark, Steampunk-propheying Revox B77 reel-to-reel effects machine, real-time sampling David Jephson's Jheri curl-slick classic "You Can't Hide (Your Love From Me)," filling out the back-end with sly loops and layering on psychedelic dub echoes. It's a wondrous bit of analog theater that I imagine, in this "digital age" I keep hearing about, would cause the same kind of pop-culture rupture if played out on *American Idol* today.

Or maybe not so much. Two of the big nightlife media hooks of the past few years have been the disco revival and the vinyl resurgence — twinned digital-reactionary movements that recall the late-1990s hip-hop and soul crate-digging of hometown heroes like DJ Shadow and Ren the Vinyl Archeologist, a fruitful response to the CD reissue mania of that time. Every technology carves out an implicit niche for its own backlash. Now, it swallows them too. Despite all the retro nostalgia, DJs still need the Internet to get their mixes out and research rare tunes. Plastic and silicon moving in tandem — it's a real mishmash.

Wilson, who spent his decks hiatus pursuing his production

career, may keep one hand on the vintage — that Revox B77 still travels with him — but he's made no secret of his enthusiasm for new fad gadgets, and felt that with the simultaneous rise of disco re-fever and software hijinks, a comeback was due.

"I think it's an exciting time," he e-mailed me from Australia, in the midst of a bonkers world tour to support his latest compilation of rejiggers, *Credit to the Edit, Vol. 2* (Tirk). "Some people pine for the old days. But great as they were, I don't like to dwell on the past too much in a nostalgic way, but use it to inform the future. I like the way younger people, who didn't directly experience the original disco era, are drawing influence from it, reshaping it from their own perspective here and now. For me, music — no matter how old it might be — is always alive and evolving, so I'm all for bringing it into a new context."

Wilson made his name in the '70s and '80s by birthing the electro-funk movement in the U.K. (www.electrofunkroots.co.uk), which pipelined many hard-to-find American dance releases to British crowds, and he came of age in a world of DJ record pools — strategic vinyl-sharing cabals that hooked cash-strapped DJs up with record companies eager to get their releases heard. Record pool culture opened the doors for innumerable disco and funk edits: DJs wanted to sound unique, so they mixed (or

CONTINUES ON PAGE 37 »

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Ego CONT.

had someone else mix) their own versions of hits, stamping them with an individual sonic imprint. Thus the hugely influential edit scene was born, paving the way for a spectrum of club remixes from genius and egregious.

No one handled edits quite like Wilson, whose pitch-perfect additions, stretches, and overlaps and live technique proved to be a bulletproof blueprint. The disco edit scene, a subsection of disco revivalism that also digs up more contemporary "lost" tracks, keeps looping back into view, the most recent fanatic attack including acts like Wolf + Lamb, Soul Clap, Les Edits Du Golem, and Tensnake, and labels like Rong, Wurst, and Ugly.

Our very own rulers of the local edit scene are King & Hound (www.myspace.com/garthgrayhound), a collaborative effort between two SF DJ legends, Garth and James Glass, on the Golden Goose label. The two met in the early '90s at the notorious Record Rack music store and have lately released tasty versions of David Ian Xtravaganza's kiki 1989 "Elements of Vogue" and Can's space-groovy "A Spectacle."

"I have quite a few of Greg's records," Garth told me over e-mail. "I recently rediscovered one of his early hip-hop records called 'We Don't Care' by Ruthless Rap Assassins, which I bought in 1987!" Glass joined in, "I grew up in London listening to Greg's mixes and I'd hear him out and about." Both of them shake off suggestions of Wilsonian influence, however. "But we're all doing the same thing — taking out the cheese and respecting the quality," Glass said.

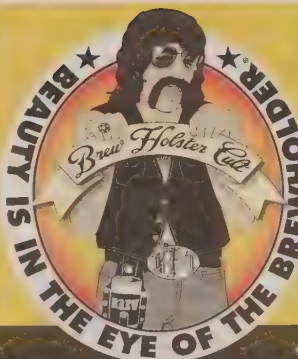
Wilson's brilliant 2009 Essential Mix mix for the U.K.'s BBC1 radio found Massive Attack and Talking Heads sharing space with Geraldine Hunt and Chic, and reintroduced him to American ears ("I think that mix illustrates what I always strive for: connecting back but moving on," he told me. "I was shocked at the overwhelmingly positive response.") But to Bay players he was always in the loop, working with the invaluable Anthony Mansfield of the Green Gorilla crew and Qzen and even visiting Haight Street a few years back to feed his '60s obsession. I recently had the opportu-

nity to explore a bit of the Bay Area's record pool and disco edit past with DJ Jim Hopkins of the ubiquitous Twitch Recordings, who currently spins eclectic sets at venues like 440 Castro and Trax. He's no stranger to the edit scene, becoming one of the youngest edit contributors in the early '80s to San Francisco disco and Hi-NRG record pool Hot Tracks and later, after Hot Tracks owner Steve Algolino passed away from AIDS, Rhythm Stick, helmed by Algolino's protégée Jenny Spiers. (He also namechecks the Bay's Disconet and New Wave-friendly Razor Maid.) Hopkins got his edit start as a teen in the '70s, using the pause button on his dad's tape deck to make his own edits, and soon grabbed professional attention. "Record companies wanted several versions of their records available for DJs, and record pools wanted to put out compilation issues for subscribers that featured unique takes on tracks, so I happily provided," he told me. "It's funny that those things are worth a fortune today."

Hopkins just started an online organization called the San Francisco Disco Preservation Society (find it at www.twitchrecordings.com) to collect and celebrate Bay-centric edits and reel-to-reel mixes. "As for the edit scene now, there seem to be two kinds being produced. There are easy-sounding ones that just extend the good parts. Then there are more serious ones that take the original and make it into something new and more moody. I think that's good for the future — because sometimes I have to laugh. Disco kids these days are pulling anything out of vinyl resale bins from 20 years ago and calling it 'classic' when most of it is crap. It was crap back then, too. Making it into anything different is doing it a favor, really." **SFBG**

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Sunday, May 16, 7PM
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MUSIC LISTINGS



PHOTO BY KELLY DALE

Seattle quartet **Eighteen Individual Eyes** play El Rio Mon/22.

Music listings are compiled by Paula Connelly and Cheryl Eddy. Since club life is unpredictable, it's a good idea to call ahead to confirm bookings and hours. Prices are listed when provided to us. Submit items at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks.

WEDNESDAY 17

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Astral Force, DC/AC El Rio, 7pm, donation. Benefit for AIDS/LifeCycle.
Epiphanette, Great Girls Blouse, Miriam Speyer and **New Blend** Retox Lounge, 9pm, free.
Filthy Thieving Bastards, Blag Dahlia, Zander Schloss The Parkside, 8pm, \$10.
Gomez, Buddy Great American Music Hall, 9pm, \$28.
Kegels, Jokes for Feelings, Mitchell Experiment Bottom of the Hill, 9pm, \$8.
Kim Wilson Blues Revue Biscuits and Blues, 8 and 10pm, \$24.
Camaron Ochs, Spooky Flowers, Ayla Nereo Café du Nord, 9:30pm, \$12.
Razorhoof, Iron Witch, Hazzards Cure Hemlock Tavern, 9pm, \$6.
Undead Boys, Love Songs, Dope Charge, Keenens Elbo Room, 6pm, \$8.
Zoo Station, Stung Slims, 8pm, \$15.

DANCE CLUBS

Booty Call Q-Bar, 456 Castro, SF; www.bootycall-wednesdays.com, 9pm. Juanita Moore hosts this dance party, featuring DJ Robot Hustle.
Hands Down! Bar on Church, 9pm, free. With DJs Claksaarb, Mykall, and guests spinning indie, electro, house, and bangers.
Jam Wednesday Infusion Lounge, 10pm, free.
DJ Slick Dee.
Machine Sloane, 1525 Mission, SF; (415) 621-7007, 10pm, free. Warm beats for happy feet with DJs Sergio, Conor, and André Lucero.
Mary-Go-Round Lookout, 3600 16th St., SF; (415) 431-0306, 10pm, \$5. A weekly drag show with hosts Cookie Dough, Pollo Del Mar, and Suppositori Spelling.
RedWine Social Dalva, 9pm-2am, free. DJ TophOne and guests spin outernational funk and get drunk.
Respect Wednesdays End Up, 10pm, \$5. Rotating DJs Daddy Rolo, Young Fyah, Irie Dole, I-Vier, Sake One, Serg, and more spinning reggae, dancehall, roots, lovers rock, and mash ups.
Synchrone Il Pirata, 2007 16th St., SF; (415) 626-2626, 10pm, free. Psychedelic dance music with DJs Helios, Gatto Matto, Psy Lotus, Intergalactoid, and guests.
Yoruba Dance Sessions Bacanot! Som., 2925 16th St., SF; (415) 558-8521, 9pm, free. With resident DJ Carlos Mena and guests spinning afro-deep-global-soulful-broken-techhouse.

Genius and the Thieves Hemlock Tavern, 9pm, \$6.
Jucifer, Grayceon, Serpent Crown Thee Parkside, 9pm, \$8.
Static Thought, Spawn Atomic, Step Up! El Rio, 8pm, \$7.
Tokyo Raid, Pan Demon, Bitch Be Cool, Housecoat Project, Red Penny One Paradise Lounge, 9pm, \$7.
Triffles, Cheetahs on the Moon, Bodice Rippers Hotel Utah, 9pm, \$6.
Victims Family, Bar Feeders, Polar Bears Bottom of the Hill, 9pm, \$10.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Babatunde Lea Quintet Yoshi's San Francisco, 8pm, \$20.
Dred Scott Quartet Coda, 9pm, \$7.
Pepe Jacobo Cigar Bar and Grill, 850 Montgomery, SF; www.cigarbarandgrill.com, 9pm, \$7.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Bassekou Kouyate, Ngoni Ba Slims, 8pm, \$25.
Dime Store Dandy Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net, 9pm, free.

DANCE CLUBS

Afrolicious Elbo Room, 9:30pm, \$5-7. DJs Pleasurmaker, Señor Oz, and guest Earthrise Soundssystem spin Afrobeat, Tropicalia, electro, samba, and funk.
Club Jammies Edinburgh Castle, 10pm, free. DJs EBERad and White Mice spinning reggae, punk, dub, and post punk.
DJ Key Bump and Tropicana Madrone Art Bar, 5-9pm. With a performance by Mestiza.
Drop the Pressure Underground SF, 6-10pm, free. Electro, house, and datafunk highlight this weekly happy hour.
Echo-A-Gogo Knockout, 10pm, free. Vintage dub reggae with DJ Lucky and friends.
Electric Feel Lookout, 3600 16th St., SF; (415) 431-0306, 9pm, \$2. With DJs subOctave and Blondie K spinning indie music videos.
Funky Rewind Skylark, 9pm, free. DJ Kung Fu Chris, MAKossa, and rotating guest DJs spin heavy funk breaks, early hip-hop, boogie, and classic Jamaican riddims.
Good Foot Yoruba Dance Sessions Bacanot! Som., 2925 16th St., SF; (415) 558-8521, 9pm, free. A James Brown tribute with resident DJs Haylow, A-Ron, and Prince Aries spinning R&B, Hip hop, funk, and soul.
Heat Icon Ultra Lounge, 10pm, free. Hip-hop, R&B, reggae, and soul.
Kick It Bar on Church, 9pm. Hip-hop with DJ Jorge Tere.
Koko Puffs Koko Cocktails, 1060 Geary; 885-4788, 10pm, free. Dubby roots reggae and Jamaican funk from rotating DJs.
Meat DNA Lounge, 9:30pm, \$2-5. Industrial with DJs BaconMonkey, Netik, Sage, and Unit 77.
Nightvision Harlot, 46 Minna, SF; (415) 777-1077, 9:30pm, \$10. DJs Danny Daze, Franky Boissy, and more spinning house, electro, hip hop, funk, and more.
Peaches Skylark, 10pm, free. With an all female DJ line up featuring Deeandroid, Lady Fingaz, That Girl, and Umami spinning hip hop.
Represent Icon Lounge, 10pm, \$5. With resident DJ Ren the Vinyl Archaeologist and guest.
Rock Candy Stud, 9pm-2am, \$5. Luscious Lucy Lipps hosts this electro-punk-pop party with music by ReXick.
Solid Club Six, 9pm, \$5. With resident DJ Daddy Rolo and rotating DJs Mpenzi, Shortcut, Polo Mo'q, and Fuze spinning roots, reggae, and dancehall.

THURSDAY 18

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Common Elder King Elder, Raccoons, Das Blut, Hiss and Hum, Marigold Crowns Amnesia, 9pm, \$7.
Willie G Biscuits and Blues, 8pm, \$15.
Gomez, One Eskimo Great American Music Hall, 9pm, \$28.
Groove Armada, Lilofee Fillmore, 8pm, \$30.
HJK, Love Is Chemicals, Rademacher Café du Nord, 8pm, \$10.
Hurry Up Shotgun, Victory and Associates,

FRIDAY 19

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Joe Bagale, Oona, Thrill of It All Independent. 9pm, \$14.
 Blasphemous Rumours, Cured Slims. 9pm, \$15.
 Con Funk Shun Yoshio's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, \$26-30.
 Deceptionik, Captain Ahab, Twin Crystals, Tik/Tak Hemlock Tavern. 9:30pm, \$6.
 Gomez, Little Ones Great American Music Hall. 9pm, \$28.
 Groove Armada, Fenech-Soler Live Fillmore. 8pm, \$30.
 Horse Operas, Goldie Wilson House of Shields. 10pm, \$5.
 Kaptron, James Lanman, Kit, Kat and the Suitecase Brothers Hotel Utah. 9pm, \$10.
 Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, \$20.
 Voodoo Glow Skulls, Hub City Stompers,

Compton SF Bottom of the Hill. 10pm, \$12.
 Yung Mars, Get Back Crew Coda. 10pm, \$10.
 Z-Trane Electric Trio, Justin Ancheta, Con Brio Pier 23. 9:30pm.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Audium 9 1616 Bush, SF; (415) 771-1616. 8:30pm, \$15.
 Black Market Jazz Orchestra Top of the Mark. 9pm, \$10.
 Emily Anne's Delights Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 8:45pm, free.
 Equinox Trio Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net. 9pm, free.
 Eric Kurtzrock Trio Ana Mandara, Ghirardelli Square, 891 Beach, SF; (415) 771-6800. 8pm, free.
 Keith Jarrett Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness, SF; www.sjazz.org. 8pm, \$30-95.

FOLK/WORD/COUNTRY

Harlem Gospel Choir Kanbar Hall, 3200 California, SF; www.jccsf.org. 8pm, \$40-45.

"Jewish Music Festival" Congregation Sherith Israel, 2266 California, SF; www.jewishmusicfestival.org. 6pm, free.
 "Journey to Shabbat" performance with Rita Glasman, Yuval Ron, and Jamie Papish. See website for complete festival schedule.
 Mazacote Cigar Bar and Grill, 850 Montgomery, SF; www.cigarbarandgrill.com. 9pm, \$7.
 Neil Robinson, Henriettas Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez, SF; www.noevalleyministryseries.com. 8:15pm, \$18.
 Bassam Saba Arab Cultural and Community Center, Two Plaza, SF; www.arabculturalcenter.org. 8pm, \$15.
 Smiley Mountain Band Plough and Stars. 9pm, \$6-10.
 Zoyres Eastern European Wild Ferment Red Poppy Art House. 8pm, \$10-15.

DANCE CLUBS

Activator! Lookout, 3600 16th St, SF; (415) 431-0306. 9pm, \$3. Face your demigods and demons at this Red Bull-fueled party.

Alcoholocaust Presents Riptide Tavern. 9pm, free. What's His Fuck spins old-school punk and other gems.

Bridges: Brooklyn to the Bay and Beyond Elbo Room. 9pm, \$8. With Djs Concerned and Jimmy Love, and live performance by Andy Allo.
 Deep Fried Butter, 354 11th St, SF; (415) 863-5964. Djs jaybee, David Justin, and Dean Manning spinning indie, dance rock, electronica, funk, hip hop, and more.
 Dirty Rotten Dance Party Madrone Art Bar. 9pm, \$5. With Djs Morale, Kap10 Harris, and Shane King spinning electro, bootybass, crunk, swampy breaks, hyphy, rap, and party classics.
 DJ Jeremiah and Friends Madrone Art Bar. 9pm, \$5. Afrobeat, ju ju, and tribal funk.
 Exhale, Fridays Project One Gallery, 251 Rhode Island; (415) 465-2129. 9pm, \$5. Happy hour with art, fine food, and music with Vin Sol, King Most, DJ Centipede, and Shane King.
 Fat Stack Fridays Koko Cocktails, 1060 Geary, SF; (415) 885-4788. 10pm, free. With rotating Djs Romanowski, B-Love, Tomas, Toph One, and

Vinnie Esparza.

Gay Asian Paradise Club Eight, 1151 Folsom, SF; www.eights.com. 9pm, \$8. Featuring two dance floors playing dance and hip hop, smoking patio, and 2 for 1 drinks before 10pm.
 Good Life Fridays Apartment 24, 440 Broadway, SF; (415) 989-3434. 10pm, \$10. With DJ Brian spinning hip hop, mashups, and top 40.
 Hot Chocolate Milk. 9pm, \$5. With Djs Big Fat Frog, Chardonn, DuseRock, and more spinning old and new school funk. This week's guest is QDUP Foundation.
 Hubba Hubba Revue DNA Lounge. 9pm, \$10-15. Burlesque show.
 Look Out Weekend Bambuddha Lounge. 4pm, free. Drink specials, food menu and resident Djs White Girl Lust, Swayzee, Philie Ocean, and more.
 Loose Stud. 10pm-3am, \$5. Djs Domino and Six spin electro and indie, with vintage porn visual projections to get you in the mood.
 M4M Fridays Underground SF. 10pm-2am.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 40 >>

Elbo Room

WED 3/17 8PM \$8
 ALCOHOLAUCAST PRESENTS
ST. PADDY'S DAY PUNK BASH X
THE LEWD UNDEAD BOYS
 (DEAD BOYS TRIP, W/ MEMBERS OF EVERYTHING MUST GO & FRACAS),
LOVE SONGS, DOPECHARGE,
THE KEENERS
 PLUS DRINK SPECIALS

THU 3/18 9:30PM \$5 \$4 11PM \$7 AFTER
 AFRO-TROPI-ELECTRIC-SAMBA-FUNK
AFROLICIOUS
 W/ DJ'S/HOSTS:
PLEASUREMAKER, SENOR OZ
 SPECIAL GUEST:
EARTHRISSE SOUNDSYSTEM

FRI 3/19 9PM \$8
 DJ CONCERNED PRESENTS
BRIDGES: BROOKLYN TO THE BAY AND BEYOND
 W/ **DJS CONCERNED & JIMMY LOVE** (HONOTOP MANDARIN);
 PLUS A LIVE PERFORMANCE **ANDY ALLO**

SAT 3/20 10PM \$10
SATURDAY NIGHT SOUL PARTY
 WITH DJS **LUCKY, PAUL PAUL, PHENGREN OSWALD**
 (\$5 DISCOUNT IN SEMI-FORMAL ATTIRE)

SUN 3/21 9PM \$8
 DUB MISSION PRESENTS: THE BEST IN DUB, DUBSTEP, ROOTS & DANCEHALL WITH
DJ SEP, MANEESH
THE TWISTER (SUNNY DUB) AND GUEST **DIG** (LODGE, PUSHING RED)

MON 3/22 9PM \$5
 \$2 DRINK SPECIALS
AMERICAN STUDIES
ASH REITER, MARK MATOS & OS BEACHES

TUE 3/23 9PM \$7
 ELBO ROOM PRESENTS
MUCHO AXE TERRORITMO, FOGA NA ROUPA

WED 3/24 10PM \$5
 ELBO ROOM PRESENTS
CLUB SHUTTER
 W/DJS **NAKO, OMAR, JUSTIN**

UPCOMING
 THU 3/25
 FRI 3/26
 SAT 3/27
 SUN 3/28
 WED 3/31

AFROLICIOUS
 AOMEFUNKTION: DIS SHORTKUT & AFOLLO
 WEDEATER/BLACK TUSK/ GATES OF SLIMMER
 DUB MISSION: DJ SEP, MEXICAN DUBWISER (LA) RADIO MOSCOW

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Make-Out Room

WED 3/17 7:30 DOOR/8PM SHOW \$3
MADAM & THE ANTS!
 ADAM & THE ANTS TRIBUTE ACT.
 9PM, NO COVER!
BURN DOWN THE DISCO!
80s DANCE PARTY
 PLEASE JOIN DJ ZSHY-SHY AND DJ MELT W/ U FOR THE
 80s DANCE PARTY THAT REALLY WANTS TO HUNT YOU.

THU 3/18 7:30PM \$7
THE TITAN-UPS! LIVE ROCKSTEADY FRANCO NERO
 9:30PM FREE
VERSION EXCURSION
 EARLY REGGAE, ROCKSTEADY, & ALITTLE SKA
 W/ YOUR DJ THE NATURAL SKELETON
 FRI 3/19 7PM \$12/ADV. \$15/DOOR
MORTIFIED
 A COMIC EXCAVATION OF PRIVATE TEENAGE
 DIARY ENTRIES, POEMS, & LOVE LETTERS
 10PM \$3
LOOSE JOINTS!
 W/ DJ'S YOM THUMP/DAMON BELL & CENTIPEDE
 RARE GROOVE, FUNK, SOUL, HIP-HOP, AND MORE!
 SAT 3/20 7:00PM \$10, (\$5 FOR 18 & UNDER)
THE SHE'S,
THE PSYCHOTHERAPISTS, & MILO
 7PM DOORS TICKETS \$12/ADVANCE, \$15/DOOR
MORTIFIED
 A COMIC EXCAVATION OF PRIVATE TEENAGE
 DIARY ENTRIES, POEMS, & LOVE LETTERS
 10PM, \$3
EL SUPERRITMO!
 EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT!
ROGER MAS Y EL KOOL KYLE
 CUMBIA, DANCEHALL, SALSA, HIP-HOP

SUN 3/21 7:30PM, \$8
 SEAWEEDESWAY SHOWCASE
CONSPIRACY OF BEARDS
CONSPIRACY OF VENUS
 HERE'S RUSTY! & MC JEREMY DALMAS

MON 3/22 9PM, NO COVER!
"SOUL KNOCKOUT"
 W/ DJS HYPER SWEATS & SWEET PAIN
 SOUL/FUNK/HIP HOP/REGGAE SOUNDS

TUESDAY MARCH 23TH 9:30PM NO COVER!
LOST & FOUND
 DEEP & SWEET 60's SOUL 45's
DJS LUCKY & PRIMO (SOUL PARTY/ NIGHTBEAT & FRIENDS)

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THU, MARCH 18
FRIDAY, MARCH 19
 DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • \$30.00
GROOVE ARMADA

SAT, MARCH 27
 DOORS 8/ SHOW 9 • \$35.00
NEAL SCHON

FRIDAY, APRIL 2
SATURDAY, APRIL 3
 DOORS 8/ SHOW 9 • \$25.00
YONDER MOUNTAIN STRING BAND KPIB

FRIDAY, APRIL 9
SATURDAY, APRIL 10
 DOORS 8/ SHOW 9 • \$25.00
CITIZEN COPE

WED, APRIL 14
 DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • \$22.50
LA ROUX

MONDAY, APRIL 19
 DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • \$27.50
ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN
 HATCHAM SOCIAL

TUESDAY, APRIL 20
 DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • \$27.50
 PERFORMING "PLEASURE PRINCIPLE"
GARY NUMAN
 BATTLE CIRCUS

THU, APRIL 22 • FRI, APRIL 23
SATURDAY, APRIL 24
 THU DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • FRI DOORS 8/ SHOW 9 • \$28.50
YO LA TENGO
 CAMERA OBSCURA (THU)
 THREE OHSEES (FRI) • SIC ALPS (SAT)

FRIDAY, APRIL 30
 DOORS 8/ SHOW 5 • \$15.50
ROGUE WAVE
 MAN/MIRACLE

SUNDAY, MAY 2
 YOLA DOORS 4/ BENCH DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • \$25.00
WANDERLUST

THURSDAY, MAY 6
 DOORS 7/ SHOW 8 • \$25.00
THE HOLD STEADY
 THE DONKEYS • A DECENT ANIMAL

FRIDAY, MAY 7
 DOORS 8/ SHOW 9 • \$26.50
MARTIN SEXTON

SATURDAY, MAY 8
 DOORS 8/ SHOW 8 • \$25.00
DRIVE BY TRUCKERS

FRIDAY, MAY 14
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Sexiest Male Bartender:
Eric Tonningsen

Sexiest Female Bartender:
Ena Dallas

Best Shrink Behind the Bar:
Rick Eggers

Funniest Bartender:
Carol Nichols

Craziest (Sexy Singing) Bartender:
Megan Fenske

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MAR 19
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MAR 23
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MAR 27
THE HALFBREEDS

MAR 28
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FRI/19 DANCE CLUBS CONT>>

Joshua J and Frankie Sharp host this man-tastic party.

Oldies Night Knockout. 9pm, \$2-4. Doo-wop, soul, and one-hit wonders with DJs Primo, Daniel, and Lost Cat.

Radioactivity 222 Hyde, SF; <http://222hyde.com>. 6pm, free. Low-budget synthesizers and Eastern European cold war beats.

Rockability Fridays Jay N Bee Club, 2736 20th St., SF; (415) 824-4190. 9pm, free. With DJs Rockin' Raul, Oakie Dran, Sergio Iglesias, and Tanoa "Samoa Boy" spinning 50s and 60s Doo Wop, Rockability, Pop, Jive, and more.

Tingel Tangel Club Second Anniversary Blowout Celebration Café du Nord. 9:30pm, \$20. With Veronica Klaus, Joey Arias, Basil Twist, Todd Almond, Faunxine, Marga Gomez, and DJs Juanita More and Bus Station John.

SATURDAY 20 ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Airfix Kits, Housecoat Project, Teutronics, DJ the Wizard, DJ Phil Lantz Knockout. 5-9pm, free. Crime record signing from 5-6pm.

Tim Barry, Possessed by Paul James, Fire * **Whiskey** The Parkside. 8:30pm, \$10.

Con Funk Shun Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, \$30.

Shane Dwight Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, \$20.

Foreverland, Barely Manilow Mezzanine. 9pm, \$15.

Inferno of Joy, Reaction, Dutch Windmill El Rio. 9pm, \$7.

Lilan Kane Blues Band Lou's Pier 47, 300 Jefferson, SF; www.louspier47.com. 8pm.

Ocotomutt, Dandeline Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net. 9pm, free.

Rosin Coven, George Cole Quintet, Kim Boekbinder Café du Nord. 9pm, \$15.

Ron Silva and the Monarchs, Franco Nero Ska Hemlock Tavern. 9:30pm, \$8.

Sleepstream Sparrows, Headshear, Richard Bitch, Annata Sound Hotel Utah. 9pm, \$8.

Small Change Romeros, Mavalour, Midway Delta, DJ unkl Funk'l El Rio. 3pm, \$8.

Uzi Tattoo, Prik Flower, Economen Thee Parkside. 3pm, free.

Xiu Xiu, Tune-Yards, Noveller Bottom of the Hill. 10pm, \$12.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Alphabet Soup Coca. 10pm, \$10.

Audion 9 1616 Bush, SF; (415) 771-1616. 8:30pm, \$15.

Eric Kurtzrock Trio Ana Mandara, Ghirardelli Square, 891 Beach, SF; (415) 771-6800. 8pm, free.

Hiromi, Robert Glasper Experiment Herbst Theatre. 401 Van Ness, SF; www.sfjazz.org. 8pm, \$25-55.

Loveseat Trio Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 8:45pm, free.

Ricardo Scales Top of the Mark. 9pm, \$15.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Albinol, Alma Desnuda Independent. 9pm, \$17.

Mark Levine and the Latin Tinge Red Poppy Art House. 8pm, \$10-15.

Marara Music Store, 66 W. Portal, SF; www.shelbyashpresents.net. 2pm, free.

Pine Box Boys, Earl Brothers, Last Men on Earth, Good Luck Thrift Store Outfit Slims. 8:30pm, \$15.

Fito Reinoso Cigar Bar and Grill, 850 Montgomery, SF; www.cigarbarandgrill.com. 9pm, \$7.

Sila, Meklit Hadero, DJ Jeremiah Great American Music Hall. 9pm, \$14.

Marcus Tardelli, Carlos Oliviera, Ricard Peixoto Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th St, SF; (415) 242-4500. 8pm, \$34.

DANCE CLUBS

Bootie: Donner Party DNA Lounge. 9pm, \$6-12. Mash-ups with John! John! and the Wagonistas.

Booty Bassment Knockout. 10pm, \$5. Hip-hop with DJs Ryan Poulsen and Dimitri Dickinson.

Cockfight Underground SF. 9pm, \$7. With DJs Earworm and Matt Hite.

Fire Corner Koko Cocktails, 1060 Geary, SF; 885-4788. 9:30pm, free. Rare and outrageous ska, rocksteady, and reggae vinyl with Revival Sound System and guests.

Fringe: An Indie Rock Dance Party Madrone Art Bar. 9pm, \$5. With DJs Blondie K and subOctave.

Full House Gravity, 3505 Scott, SF; (415) 776-1928. 9pm, \$10. With DJs Roost Uno and Pony P spinning dirty hip hop.

HYP Club Eight, 1151 Folsom, SF; www.eightsf.com. 10pm, free. Gay and lesbian hip hop party, featuring DJs spinning the newest in the top 40s hip hop and hyphy.

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HAPPY HOUR SHOW
UZI TATTOO
PRIK FLOWER
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NECRITE
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3/24 - NO CAPTAINS, BLACK SAILS-WESTERN
SHORES, WHY I HATE, THE
SINGULARITY
3/25 - THE FLAKES, HOT LUNCH, SILVER
SKIES
3/26 - MIDNIGHT BOMBERS, GET DEAD, MY
LIFE IN BLACK AND WHITE,
ROCKFISH
3/27 - TUMBLEDOWN, THE FAMOUS,
ANDREW ANDERSON, JESSE MURKIS
& THE MAN COUGARS
3/28 - FOGEL FEST! A BENEFIT FOR DAVID
FOGEL
4/1 - TERROR, IGNITE, HOUR OF THE WOLF,
CRUCIFIED, BOUNDARIES
4/16 - CRIME IN STEREO, ROBBERS

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DISASTROID
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8PM \$10 thekeherweb.com

3/20 DOOR 9PM \$7
HELLA GAY
DJ'S BLACK, GSTAR &
ROTATING GUEST DJ'S
SPINNING ELECTRONICA, INDIE,
HOUSE & HIP-HOP

3/26 DOOR 9PM \$8
BART DAVENPORT PRESENTS:
**SAM FLAX &
HIGHER COLOR**
SWEET CHARIOT, BIG EAGLE
DJ'S SEANTE BOOGIE & BART D

Marti Brom
QUARTER
MILE
COMBO
The Tantrums
**SATURDAY
MARCH 27**
8PM \$12

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SAN FRANCISCO
FRIDAY • MARCH 26 • 6PM
CHATMONCHY
Chatmonchy are three girls from Japan who rock.
Their latest album *Hyperion - Coupling Collection*
(out 3/24) bursts with catchy girl-rock power. Also
catch them later that night at The Independent in SF.

THURSDAY • APRIL 1 • 6PM
SURFER BLOOD
Surfer Blood has penned a debut album full of
catchy indie songs that even the most hook-laden
power pop band would be rightfully jealous of. *Astro*
Coast comes across like early Orange Juice covering
every song on Weezer's *Blue Album* at once.

BERKELEY
SUNDAY • MARCH 28 • 2PM
AMOEBA HOME GROWN PRESENTS
DAVE SMALLEN
Dave Smallen, formerly of Street to Nowhere, is a
singer/songwriter from Oakland. His new album,
Everything Changes and Nothing Changes, was
released as a series of singles over the course of
2009 and is now out as a full-length CD!

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com. For more info call Cesar Plate at
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FRIDAY MARCH 19
**Entrepreneurs for
Reshma**
5:00-8:00pm
Reshma Saujani, the first south Asian
woman to run for US Congress is coming
to SF. For more info 810.614.8758 or
kanelofreshma2010@gmail.com.

La Gran Pachanga!
9:00-2:00am | \$15 donation asked
Food & fashion with music by Bang Dade,
Vornito Liriko, DJ Mel-wun, DJ Terbo Ted
and more... Presented by Buena Vista
Elementary School (www.esueclabv.org)

SATURDAY MARCH 20
Shine
9:00-2:00am | \$10
Presented by Boogie Events with host
Kris D with DJs Switlock, Digga, Izzace
and more...

MONDAY MARCH 22
EAT
5:00-10:30pm
EAT is a dining experience that is a cross
between dinner, happy hour, and a night
club. For more info go to eatat11minna.blogspot.com

LOOK HERE FOR MORE:
punksgitout.blogspot.com
mstrmn.com
111minnagallery.com

info@sanfrancisco.com. 10pm. \$15. With Javi Cannus, Sheff, Dutch, Michael Anthony, Jeff Richmond, and Hil Huerta.
Saturday Night Soul Party Elbo Room. 10pm. \$10. With Djs Lucky, Phengren Oswald, and Paul Paul.
Shiaram 1015 Folsom. 10pm. \$10. With DJ Roaz, Taj, and more.
Social Club Lookout, 3600 16th St., SF. (415) 431-0306. 9pm. Shake your money maker with Djs Lee Decker and Luke Fry.
Spirit Fingers Sessions 33rd 9pm. free. With DJ Morse Code and live guest performances.

SUNDAY 21

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

B-Stars, Hi Rhythm Hustlers, Royal Deuces, Karling Abbeygate Band Knockout. 9pm, \$8.
Blowfly, Clarence Reid, Knights of the New Crusade, Awesome Party DNA Lounge. 6:30pm, \$15.

David Matthew Daniels, Robert Meade, Sean McArdle Brainwash Café, 1122 Folsom, SF. www.brainwash.com. 6pm, free.
Tuesday Band Biscuits and Blues. 8pm, \$15.
Fat Kreator, Kataklysm, Evile, Lightning Swords of Death Slims. 8pm, \$24.
Massive Moth, Your Cannons, Here Come the Saviours Hemlock Tavern. 9:30pm, \$6.
Janelle Monae Café du Nord. 8pm, \$12.
Ralph's World Swedish American Hall (upstairs from Café du Nord). 3pm, \$18.
Rollercoaster, Watch it Sparkle, Sweet Nothing Kimo's. 9pm.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Terry Disley Washington Square Bar and Grill, 1707 Powell, SF. (415) 433-1188. 6pm, free.
"Jazz Jam Session" Epicenter Café. 6pm, free.
Sunday Sessions Madrone Art Bar. 6pm, free. With Wil Blades.
Kenny Washington Bliss Bar, 4026 24th St. SF. (415) 826-6200. 4:30pm, \$10.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Motel Drive, Clay The Parkside. 4pm, free.
"Salsa Sundays" El Rio. 4pm, \$5. With Danilo y Universal.
Jake Shimabukuro Yoshi's San Francisco. 7 and 9pm, \$18-24.
"Te Gusto Musical" Coda. 8pm, \$10. With Anthony Blea and friends.

DANCE CLUBS

Call In Sick Skylark. 9pm, free. Djs Animal and I Will spin danceable hip-hop.
DiscoFunk Mashups Cat Club. 10pm, free. House and 70's music.
Dub Mission Elbo Room. 9pm, \$6. Dub, roots,

and classic dancehall with DJ Sep, Maneesh the Twister, and guest DJG.
Gloss Sundays Trigger, 2344 Market, SF. (415) 551-CLUB. 7pm. With DJ Hawthorne spinning house, funk, soul, retro, and disco.
Honey Soundsystem Paradise Lounge. 8pm-2am. "Dance floor for dancers - sound system for lovers." Got that?
Kick It Bar on Church. 9pm. Hip-hop with DJ Zax.
Stag Asia SF. 6pm, \$5. Gay bachelor parties are the target demo of this weekly erotic tea dance.

MONDAY 22

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

American Studies, Ash Reiter, Mark Matos and Os Beaches Elbo Room. 9pm, \$6.
Karine Denike, Dina Macabee Band, Upstairs Downstairs Knockout. 9pm, \$7.
"Felonious Presents Live City Revue" Coda. 9pm, \$7.

AMNESIA

8pm. FREE. LIVE GYPSY JAZZ w/ GAUCHO

9pm. FREE. St. Patrick's Day w/ THE DOG'S BOLLOCKS & The Barbary Ghosts

6:30pm. FREE. EARLY CLASSICAL STRING QUARTET QUATROCELLI

9pm. \$7. JRD THURSDAY NOISE/EXPERIMENTAL w/ Common Elder, King Elder, Raccoons, Das Blue, Mios & Hum, Plantgold Crews

7pm - 9pm. FREE. EARLY ROB REICH & CRAIG VENTRESCO

9pm. \$5. HELLA: TIGHT Djs Asti Spumante, Vinnie Esparrza Spinning 80's, Soul, Hip Hop, Disco

6pm. \$5. EARLY Songbird Festival Presents JUNE DIMORENTE Heather Von D & Lily Taylor

later. O.K. Holo Presents: GOSUB (Miami, Clinique), Eats Tapes (tigerbeats), Body Body + guest dj ANDY CABIC (vetiver)

6:30pm. FREE. FREE BLUEGRASS MONDAYS w/ The Barefoot Melies

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Bias Tape, AJ Rivlin El Rio. 8pm, free.
Jason Collett, Bahamas, Zeus Café du Nord. 8:30pm, \$15.
Jamie Cullum, Imelda May Fillmore. 8pm, \$35.
Fell Voices, Addaura, Elk, Necrite, DJ Rob Metal The Parkside. 8pm, \$8.
Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, Bleached Great American Music Hall. 9pm, \$17.
Serena Maneesh, Depreciation Guild, Veil Veil

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FRI 3/19 KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLES 10PM

SAT 3/20 DJ DANC 10PM

SUN 3/21 KARAOKE w/ KEN 5PM & DJ METROLICIOUS 10PM

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Thralls, All Time High, Hollow Earth Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, \$6.

DANCE CLUBS

Alcoholocaust Presents Argus Lounge. 9pm, free. With Djs Corruptor Ref, Sebastian Twot, and What's His Fuck.
Eclectic Company Skylark. 9pm, free. Djs Tones and Jaybee spin old school hip hop, bass, dub, glitch, and electro.
La Escuelita Pisco Lounge, 1817 Market, SF. (415) 874-9951. 7pm, free. DJ Juan Data spinning gay-friendly, Latino sing-alongs but no salsa or reggaeton.
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SAT Mar 20 9:30pm, \$8	RON SILVA & THE MONARCHS Franco Nero Sku
SUN Mar 21 9:30pm, \$6	MASSIVE MOTH Your Cannons Here Come the Saviours
MON Mar 22 10pm, FREE	PUNK ROCK SIDESHOW w/ DJ Traugott & Duchesne of Nazard
TUE Mar 23 9pm, \$6	THE THRILLS All Time High (Seattle) Wallow Earth
WED Mar 24 9pm, \$8	Kymberly's Music Box presents: POWER SOLO Chris Jones Chief Nowhere Federale and deejay Neil Martinsson

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7:30P **RED HOTS BURLESQUE**
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SAT 3/20
8P **SMALL CHANGE ROMEOS, MAVALOUR, MIDWAY DELTA, DJ UNK'L FUNK'L** (INDIE) PATIO SHOW

SUN 3/21
3-8P **SALSA SUNDAYS**
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DOLLAR DAYS \$1 PABST/\$2 WELL

MON 3/22
7P **MAMA LION, EIGHTEEN INDIVIDUAL EYES, THE HEATED** (INDIE) \$5

TUE 3/23
8P **BIAS TAPE, AJ RVLEN** (INDIE/ACOUSTIC) NOS



Sarah Kathleen Farrell portrays an expectant mother in Ray of Light Theatre's production of *Baby: A Musical*, opening this week at the Off-Market Theatres.

Stage listings are compiled by Guardian staff. Performance times may change; call venues to confirm. Reviewers are Robert Avila, Rita Felciano, and Nicole Gluckstern. Submit items for the listings at lists@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks.

THEATER

OPENING

Baby: A Musical Off-Market Theatres, 965 Mission; 1-800-838-3006, www.roltheatre.com, \$20-32. Previews Thurs/18, 8pm. Opens Fri/19, 8pm. Runs Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through April 18. Ray of Light Theatre performs a comedy about pregnancy.

Ramble-Ations: A One D'Lo Show Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th St; 647-2822, www.brava.org, \$10-25. Opens Wed/17, 8pm. Runs Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through April 3. Performance artist D'Lo offers up a comedic solo show from a unique (gay, Hindi, Sri Lankan, SoCal, hip-hop) perspective.

Truce Noh Space, 2840 Mariposa; 826-1958, \$10-25. Previews Wed/17, 8pm. Opens Thurs/18, 8pm. Runs Wed-Sat, 8pm. Through April 3. Playwright-performer Marilee Talkington stars in Vanguardian Productions' presentation of her autobiographical work about a woman struggling with impending blindness.

ONGOING

...And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi Cutting Ball Theater, 277 Taylor; 1-800-838-3006, www.cuttingball.com, \$15-30. Opens Fri/19, 8pm. Runs Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 5pm. Through April 11. Cutting Ball presents this deeply personal fantasy play inspired by the myth of Demeter and Persephone and directed by Amy Mueller.

Caddyshack: Live! Dark Room, 2263 Mission; 401-7987, www.brownpapertickets.com/event/99361, \$20. Fri-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. The Dark Room presents Jim Fourniadi's live adaptation of the iconic movie.

Death Play EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy; 673-3847, www.theexit.org, \$15-20. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. Thunderbird Theatre Company presents the third installment in the comedy series by Sang S. Kim.

Den of Thieves SF Playhouse, 533 Sutter; 677-9596, www.sfplayhouse.org, \$40. Tues, 7pm; Wed-Sat, 8pm (also Sat, 3pm). Through April 17. Stephen Adly Guirgis has been good to SF Playhouse. The company already scored big with two of the New Yorker's gritty, dark and

sharply funny plays, *Our Lady of 121st Street* and *Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train*. Director Susi Damilano continues the streak with SF Playhouse's latest, the less heavy but very funny *Den of Thieves*, about an unlikely foursome of inept bandits caught trying to heist a Mafioso's safe under a discotheque in Queens — a simple tale that gives plenty of scope to Guirgis's muscular way with dialogue and the clash of characters. The story opens on a depressed recovering kleptomaniac, Maggie (an affectingly understated Kathryn Tkel), and her 12-step sponsor Paul (the excellent Casey Jackson), a nerdy fast-talking mixed-race former safecracker, whose Jewish grandfather headed up a famous crime ring that robin-hooded their take to library construction for kids in the neighborhood. Enter Maggie's former boyfriend, a Puerto Rican tough named Flaco (a hilariously spot-on Chad Deverman), with his new squeeze, erotic dancer Boochie (a deftly comic Corinne Proctor), and a lead on a large traceless sum of cash. Suddenly the smell of big money sends recovery out the window and makes uneasy bed-fellows of the motley, hostile bunch. Enter angry but softhearted mobster Little Tuna (Ashkon Davaran), his sadistic sidekick Sal (Peter Ruocco), and big gun Big Tuna (Joe Madero). Facing mob vengeance, it's time for some fast-talking and deal making among the mini-den, and all bets are off. The ending seems to have eluded Guirgis a little, but the way there makes for meaty comedy, while the exceptional cast sells the conceit so beautifully they make it a crime to miss. (Avila)

Desperate Affection Royce Gallery, 2901 Mariposa; www.expressionproductions.com, \$28. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through April 10. Expression Productions presents a dark comedy by Bruce Graham.

Eat, Pray, Laugh! Off-Market Theatres, 965 Mission; www.brownpapertickets.com, \$20. Wed, 8pm. Through April 28. Off-Market Theatres presents stand up comic and solo artist Alicia Dattner in her award-winning solo show.

Juliet Little Theatre, Creative Arts Bldg, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway; <http://creativearts.sfsu.edu/events/1412/Juliet>, \$8-12. Thurs/18-Sat/20, 8pm; Sun/21, 2pm. Can a cast of seven Juliets a *Romeo and Juliet* make? Very much so. In fact, this devised work, directed by Mark Jackson and beautifully brought to life by an exceptional student cast from SF State's theater department, conveys not just the poetry but the sheer energy, surprise, and shock of living — at the very heart of the work — better than any recent straight-ahead production in recent memory. This vibrant, movement-based, and repeatedly stunning postmodern Juliet retains

CONTINUES ON PAGE 44 »

SINGLES PARTIES

MAR 12 Cougar Match Your Key Dance, Palo Alto

MAR 16 St Patrick's Eve Mixer, San Rafael

MAR 19 Welcome Spring Dance, Mountain View

MAR 20 Silver Fox Dance, San Francisco

MAR 24 Young Single Professionals Mixer, Sunnyvale

MAR 27 Wine Tasting & Dance Party, Lafayette

APR 2 World's Oldest Cougar Comedy/Dance Extravaganza, Millbrae

APR 3 Young At Heart Easter Mixer, San Francisco

APR 17 Tropical Nights Dance, Sunnyvale

APR 24 Sacramento Cougar Convention

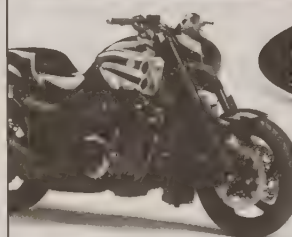
APR 28 Free Single Travelers Party, Palo Alto

MAY 7 A Night to Remember, Palo Alto

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STAGE LISTINGS

ONGOING

CONT>>

the dramatic arc of Shakespeare's tragedy, yet runs another parallel arc of its own, exploring the perspective of Juliet as an extremely intelligent, vital and growing young woman by ingeniously refracting her through the lives and memories of seven actors, six female (Arisa Bega, Charlotte Gulezian, Meredith, Frannie Morrison, Megan Trout, Mai Kou Vang) and one male (Dara Yazdani). The results are not to be missed, providing something truly unique as well as one of the most compelling ways into a text that refuses to die despite a million bad productions. Excellent scenic and lighting designs (by Hannah Murray and Clyde Sheets, respectively) and a truly outstanding sound design by Matt Stines offer fine mood-casting support throughout. (Avila)
KML Preaches to the Choir Jewish Theater, 470 Florida; www.killingmylobster.com. \$15-20. Thurs-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 7 and 10pm; Sun, 7pm. Through March 28. The award-winning sketch comedy group takes aim at the higher powers in this piece directed by Paco Romane.

Loveland The Marsh, 1074 Valencia; 826-5750, www.themarsh.org. \$15-50. Sat, 8:30pm; Sun, 7pm. Through April 11. Los Angeles-based writer-performer Ann Randolph returns to the Marsh with a new solo play partly developed during last year's Marsh run of her memorable *Squeeze Box*. Randolph plays loner Frannie Potts, a rambunctious, cranky, and libidinous individual of decidedly odd men, who is flying back home to Ohio after the death of her beloved mother. The flight is occasion for Frannie's own flights of memory, exotic behavior in the aisle, and unabashed advances toward the flight deck brought on by the seductively confident strains of the captain's commentary. The singular personality and mother-daughter relationship that unfurls along the way is riotously depicted and brilliantly humane. (Avila)

Mirrors in Every Corner Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia; 626-2787, www.theintersection.org. \$15-25. Thurs/18-Sun/21, 8pm. Try to ask someone who's ever felt marked by the color (any color) of their skin if they believe in a post-racial society, and see what kind of a response you elicit. That there is no tidy answer to this potentially messy question is a conundrum well-illustrated by playwright Chinaka Hodge's hypothetical fable of a white-skinned baby born into an African-American family. Each member of the family has a different reaction to and relationship with the mysterious blonde-haired changeling Miranda, dubbed "Random". Her father, who dies when she is young, is reported to have hated her. Her oldest brother Watts (Daveed Diggs) claims to understand her best, but in trying to get her to unravel what it means to be "black" vs. "white" reveals himself to be as confused as anyone by the lack of a single definition. Her mother Willie—played tough and no-nonsense by Margo Hall (who also plays the teenage Miranda)—loves her unconditionally, yet ultimately sacrifices her for the well-being of the greater family unit. Hodge's first full-length play, *Mirrors* succeeds in strong performance, warm humor, and crackling, poetic dialogue, but fails to adequately resolve how it is that the otherwise uncompromising Willie lets the low card of an unfortunate accident trump her otherwise strong hand of "colorblind" maternal loyalty. With Dwight Huntsman and Traci Tolmaire. (Gluckstern)

Now and at the Hour EXIT Stage Left, 156 Eddy; 673-3847, www.theexit.org. \$15-25. Fri-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. EXIT presents the subtly unnerving show by theatrical magician Christian Cagall.

Pearls Over Shanghai Hypnodrome, 575 Tenth St.; 1-800-838-3006, www.thrillpeddlers.com. \$30-69. Sat, 8pm; Sun, 7pm. Through April 24. Thrillpeddlers presents this revival of the legendary Cockettes' 1970 musical extravaganza.

The Real Americans The Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 826-5750, www.themarsh.org. \$18-50. Wed-Fri, 8pm (April 16, show at 9pm; starting April 24, no Fri shows except May 28, 8pm); Sat, 5pm; Sun, 3pm. Through May 30. The Marsh presents the world premiere of Dan Hoyle's new solo show.

Shopping! The Musical Shelton Theater, 533 Sutter; 1-800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. \$27-29. Fri-Sat, 8pm. The musical is now in its fifth year at Shelton Theater.

Something You Might Want Stagewerx Theatre, 533 Sutter; www.catchynametheatre.org. \$16. Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through March 28. CatchyNameTheatre presents this dark comedy

written and directed by Jim Stroppe.

Suddenly Last Summer Actors Theatre, 855 Bush; 345-1287, www.actorstheatref.org. \$15-35. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. Actors Theatre presents one of Tennessee Williams' finest and most famous plays.

The Sugar Witch New Conservatory Theatre Center, 25 Van Ness; 861-4914, www.nctcsf.org. Wed-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through April 4. NCTC presents the premiere of Nathan Sanders' crime story.

What Mama Said About Down There Our Little Theater, 287 Ellis; 820-3250, www.theatrebayarea.org. \$15-25. Thurs-Sun, 8pm. Through July 30. Writer-performer-activist Sia Anna presents this largely political, a bit clinical, inherently sexual, and utterly unforgettable performance piece.

BAY AREA

Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison, Berk; (510) 647-2949, berkeleyrep.org. \$13.50-27. Days and times vary. Through April 11. Berkeley Rep presents a sexy and intriguing new show from Naomi Iizuka.

East 14th Laney College Theatre, 900 Fallon St., Oak; www.east14thoak.eventbrite.com. \$10-50. Fri-Sat, 8:30pm. Through March 28. Also at the Marsh Berkeley in March. Don Reed's solo play, making its Oakland debut after an acclaimed New York run, is truly a welcome homecoming twice over. (Avila)

Handless Central Stage, 5221 Central, Richmond; 1-800-838-3006, www.raggedwing.org. \$15-30. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. Ragged Wing Ensemble presents Amy Saxe's re-invention of the folk-tale *The Handless Maiden*.

Learn to be Latina La Val's Subterranean, 1834 Euclid, Berk. impacttheatre.com. \$10-20. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. Impact Theatre continues its 14th season with the world premiere of Enrique Urueta's play.

Singin' in the Rain Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College, Berk; (510) 665-5565, www.berkeleyplayhouse.org. \$19-28. Fri/19, 7:30pm; Sat/20, 2 and 7pm; Sun/21, 1 and 6pm. Berkeley Playhouse presents this classic musical.

PERFORMANCE

"All Star Magic & More" SF Playhouse, Stage Two, 533 Sutter; 646-0776, www.comedyonthesquare.com. Sun, 7pm. Ongoing. \$20. Magician RJ Owens hosts the longest running magic show in San Francisco.

"Bananaritis!" CounterPULSE, 1310 Mission; 1-800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. Sat, 8pm. \$20. Tim Rubel Human Shakes presents a performance piece that examines queer relationships.

BATS Improv Theatre Bayfront Theater, Fort Mason Center, B350 Fort Mason; 474-6776, www.improv.org. Fri-Sat, 8pm. \$17-20. The TheatreSports show format treats audiences to an entertaining and engaging night of theater and comedy presented as a competition.

"The Cat's Pajamas" Make-Out Room, 3225 22nd St; www.makeoutroom.com. Mon, 8pm. \$5. This month's installment of the performance series hosts the Revolutionary Poets Brigade, among other acts.

"HyperReal" Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, 701 Mission; 978-ARTS, www.ybca.org. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. \$25. Bay Area artist Sara Kraft debuts her tech-vs-mind exploration, a fusion of text, song, sound, movement, and video.

PianoFight Studio 250 at Off-Market, 965 Mission; www.pianofight.com. Mon, 8pm. Through March 29. \$20. The female-driven variety show *Monday Night ForePlays* returns with brand-new sketches, dance numbers, and musical performances.

"Shelterado X: A Year in Review (2009)" Phoenix Theatre, 414 Mason; 885-9526. Fri-Sat, 8pm. Through March 27. \$25. Short plays by local writers take on topics as varied as Muni and Bernie Madoff.

"Two on a Party" Artaud Theater, 450 Florida; 1-800-838-3006. Sat-Sun, 8pm. \$18-20. Word for Word performs the Tennessee Williams work before they head off to present it in France.

VergeFest Garage, 975 Howard; 885-4006. Fri-Sun, 8pm. \$10-20. Featuring contemporary dance, improvisation, and performance.

Virgin Play Series Magic Theatre, Fort Mason Center, Bldg D, Marina at Laguna, SF; 240-4454, <http://magictheatre.org>. Mon, 6pm. Free (reservations recommended). Through March 29. Magic Theatre presents Martha Heasley Cox's series of staged readings of works currently in development. This week: Ryan Purcell's Brazilian musical *Marinheiro*. **SFBG**



Jennifer Aniston pedals through yet another romantic comedy: *The Bounty Hunter*, out Fri/19.

PHOTO BY BARRY WETCHER SMPSP

Film listings are edited by Cheryl Eddy. Reviewers are Kimberly Chun, Michelle Devereaux, Max Goldberg, Dennis Harvey, Johnny Ray Huston, Erik Morse, Louis Peitzman, Lynn Rapoport, Ben Richardson, and Matt Sussman. The film intern is Peter Galvin. For rep house showtimes, see Rep Click. For first-run showtimes, see Movie Guide at www.sfbg.com. For complete film listings, see www.sfbg.com.

SF INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

The 28th San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival runs through Sun/21 at the Sundance Kabuki, 1881 Post, SF; Viz Cinema, 1746 Post, SF; Clay, 2261 Fillmore, SF; Pacific Film Archive, 2575 Bancroft, Berkeley; and Camera 12 Cinemas, 201 South Second St., San Jose. Tickets (most shows \$12) available at www.asianamericanfilmfestival.org. All times pm. For schedule, see www.sfbg.com.

OPENING

The Bounty Hunter Gerard Butler and Jennifer Aniston play a formerly married couple who ... zzzzz. Huh? Oh, whatever. (1:50)

Diary of a Wimpy Kid The agonies of middle school come to life in this kid-friendly comedy. (2:00)

The Girl on the Train André Téchiné's beautifully photographed, ripped-from-the-headlines film explores the events that led a young Parisian girl to lie about being the victim of an anti-semitic attack. Téchiné's dramatization falls as an account of the incident, but the film manages to evoke a powerfully mysterious tone due largely to two stellar performances, by Émilie Dequeume as the 20-something Jeanne and Catherine Deneuve as her persistent mother. Much of the running time follows Jeanne's experiences before the fabrication, as she falls for (and moves in with) a young wrestler named Frank, before a tragic event causes Jeanne to invent the famous lie. An arty exploration into the psychology of victimization that happens to be anchored by a real-life event, *The Girl on the Train* may disappoint those looking for easy answers but is undeniable as a showcase for some outstanding acting. (1:42) *Embarcadero, Shattuck* (Galvin)

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo See "Life After Death." (2:32) *Albany, Embarcadero*. **Young Hong Kong** Joe's latest is a crime drama about a mentally challenged murder suspect and his formidable mother. See review at www.sfbg.com. (2:09) *Clay, Shattuck*.

Neil Young Trunk Show As loose as Jonathan Demme's prior Neil doc *Heart of Gold* (2006) was, this, with a taste for rave-ups where that film emphasized the mellower country-rock side, this neck-deep waste into Young's four-decade-plus songbook is pretty dang nirvanic. Shot at the Tower Theater in Upper Darby, PA—exactly the kind of funky old mid-sized venue you'd want to see him at—it's assembled via camera and editorial choices as seemingly random yet astute as Young's grab bag of tunes. The latter range from historic hits ("Cinnamon Girl," "Harvest," "Cowgirl in the Sand") to more recent compositions ("The Believer," "No Hidden Path") and some real obscu-

rities from the bottom of that trunk, including a few acoustic heartbreakers. Even shown out of concert order—there's never any sense just where we are in the audience's evening—they meld seamlessly, the epic half-hour oceanics of "Path" just as well as something small and plaintive like "Sad Movies." Never in better voice (qualify that as you will) at age 65, surrounded by an assured band of five plus scattered oddball props and one live canvas painter, Young is the eye of this particular hurricane—even if "Like a Hurricane" is the one performance that feels a tad uninspired. If you're a fan, this will be pretty close to sheer ecstasy. If not... well, frankly, I have absolutely no idea whether you'll be converted, mildly entertained, or bored to death. (1:22) *Lumiere, Shattuck*. (Harvey)

Repo Men Nope, not a sequel to the 1984 cult classic. Jude Law and Forest Whitaker will, however, relieve you of your futuristic mechanical organs if you can't pay for them post-transplant. (1:53) *Shattuck*.

The Runaways In Floria Sigismondi's tale of the rise and fall of a 1970s all-girl band, LA producer Kim Fowley (Michael Shannon) proclaims that the Runaways are going to save rock and roll. It's hard to gauge the sincerity of this pronouncement, but you can certainly hear, in songs like "Cherry Bomb" and "Queens of Noise," how the band must have brightened a landscape overrun by kings of prog rock. Unfortunately, a handful of teenagers micromanaged by a sleazy, abusive nutcase proved not quite up to the task, though the band did launch the careers of metal guitarist Lita Ford (Scott Taylor-Campton) and, more famously, Joan Jett (Kristen Stewart). Sigismondi's film entertainingly sketches the Runaways' beginnings in glam rock fandom and gradual attainment of their own rabid fan base. We get Currie lip-synching Bowie to catcalls at the high school assembly, Jett composing "Cherry Bomb" with Fowley, glamtastic hair-and-wardrobe eye candy, pills-and-Stooges-fueled intra-band fooling around, and five teenage girls sent off sans chaperone on an international tour with substantial quantities of hard drugs in their carry-on luggage. What follows is less pretty: a capsule version of the band's disintegration after the departure of bottoming-out 16-year-old lead singer Cherie Currie (Dakota Fanning), in a film darkened by Currie's trajectory, Jett's subsequent success is a feel-good coda, but it's awkwardly attached and emblemizes one of *The Runaways'* main problems. When the band begins to fall apart, the film doesn't know which way to turn and ends up telling no one's story well. (1:42) *Bridge*. (Rapoport)

ONGOING

Aljani (2:00) *Embarcadero, Shattuck*.

Alice in Wonderland (1:48) *Castro, Cerrito, Empire, 1000 Van Ness, SF Center, Sundance Kabuki*.

The Art of the Steal (1:41) *Elmwood, Opera Plaza, Smith Rafael*.

Avatar (2:42) *1000 Van Ness*.

The Blind Side (2:06) *Elmwood, Oaks, Brooklyn's Fine*. (2-2-21) *1000 Van Ness, Shattuck*.

The Crazies (1:41) *1000 Van Ness*.

Crazy Heart (1:51) *Lumiere, Piedmont, 1000 Van Ness, Shattuck, Sundance Kabuki*.

An Education (1:35)

Oaks, Smith Rafael.

The Ghost Writer (1:49) *California*.

Embarcadero, Piedmont, Sundance Kabuki.

Green Zone (1:55) *California, Empire, 1000 Van Ness, Piedmont, Sundance Kabuki*.

The Hurt Locker (2:11) *Cerrito, Opera Plaza, Shattuck*.

The Last Station (1:52)

Albany, Opera Plaza.

The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel

Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers (1:34)

Shattuck, Smith Rafael.

North Face (2:01)

Smith Rafael.

Our Family Wedding (1:41) *1000 Van Ness*.

Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The

Lightning Thief (1:59) *1000 Van Ness*.

A Prophet (2:29) *Embarcadero, Shattuck*.

Smith Rafael.

Remember Me Ominously set in New York City during the summer of 2001, *Remember Me*, starring Robert Pattinson (of the *Twilight* series) and Emma de Ravin (of *TV's Lost*), pretty much answers the question of whether it's still too soon to make the events of September 11 the subject of a date movie. Or rather, not the subject so much as the specter waiting just off-camera for its walk-on while brooding 21-year-old Tyler Hawkins (Pattinson) quotes Gandhi, gets into brawls, gets drunk, writes letters to his dead brother, and otherwise channels despondency and rage into various salubrious outlets. One of these is

romancing (under circumstances severely testing the viewer's credulity) de Ravin's Ally Craig, grappling somewhat more constructively with her own familial tragedy. Ally is the sort of self-possessed, strong-willed young woman whose instincts, shortly after she's been backhanded by her drunk father (Chris Cooper), tell her to placate and have sex with her drunk boyfriend when he comes home enraged after battling his own father (Pierce Brosnan). She is there to teach Tyler, through quirky habits like eating dessert first, what director Allen Coulter (2006's *Hollywoodland*) wishes to teach us: that time is short and one must fill one's life with meaningful actions—like throwing a fire extinguisher through a window to convince a classroom of tweens to stop bullying one's little sister. The film is seeded with allusions to an impending catastrophe that feels less integrated than exploited. And it's uncomfortable seeing the fall of the towers used to make the ground shake under a sweet, fairly depthless depiction of love and grief. (2:08) *Empire, 1000 Van Ness, Sundance Kabuki*. (Rapoport)

She's Out of My League From the co-writers of the abysmal *Sex Drive* (2008), *She's Out of My League* could be another 90-minute assemblage of gross-out humor, dick jokes, and unabashed homophobia. As it turns out, the latest offering from Sean Anders and John Morris is legitimately funny—far better than the trailer (and that half-assed title) would have you believe. The adorkable Jay Baruchel stars as Kirk, a hapless loser who finds himself dating bonafide hottie Molly (Alice Eve). Once you get past the film's silly conceit—Kirk's only "movie ugly," and personality goes a long way—you're left with a surprisingly charming comedy. The characters are amusing and the wit is sharp. Not to mention the fact that *She's Out of My League* offers a downright heart-felt message. There's a sincerity here that feels genuine instead of just tacked-on: yeah, yeah, it's about what's inside that counts, but there's more to it than that. Ignore the dreadful "jizz in my pants" scene, and the movie's almost an old-fashioned romcom. (1:44) *Elmwood, Oaks, 1000 Van Ness, SF Center*. (Peltzman)

Shutter Island (2:18) *California, 1000 Van Ness, Sundance Kabuki*.

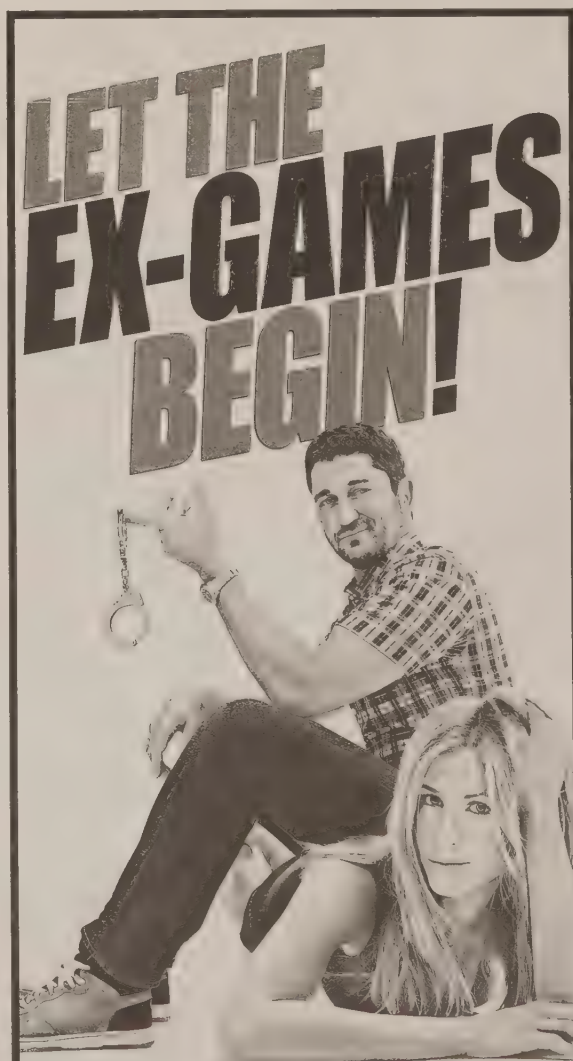
A Single Man (1:39) *1000 Van Ness, Opera Plaza*.

Sweetgrass (1:41)

Lumiere, Shattuck.

REP PICKS

The Female Bunch Al Adamson was the Ed Wood Jr. of the late 60s and 1970s, albeit a version without any delusions of grandeur—In it for the money, he knew his ultra-cheap films were crap. This one, titled to cash in on *The Wild Bunch* and made the same year (though there were no distribution takers until 1971, two years later), is closer to an unacknowledged, soporific remake of Herschell Gordon Lewis' great '68 *Sex-Devils on Wheels*, with the deadly dames on horseback rather than motorcycles. When Sandy (Nesa Renee) is dumped by her faithless Vegas lounge singer boyfriend—and no wonder, since she behaves like a Velcro doormat—her showgirl friend Libby (peroxide-blond perennials Adamson star and subsequent spouse Regina Carroll) recommends she join a "club" of women on a secret ranch. They smuggle drugs, have soft-core orgies (with Mexican men and each other), abuse the local "wetbacks," and enforce a strict "no men" rule on ranch property whose violation can lead to the poor sod getting branded, dragged to death, or worse. One such unfortunate is Russ Tamblin, who sure fell hard and fast from being third-billed in Best Picture winner *West Side Story* just eight years prior, another is pathetic ranch hand Lon Chaney, Jr. in one of his last roles, seeming even more pathetic than called for because he was undergoing debilitating cancer treatments at the time. The "sex-devil" here is serious man-hater Grace, whose thespian Jennifer Bishop also appeared in such greats as 1970's *Bigfoot* (as one of the pretty girls it keeps chained in its cave), 1974's *Impulse* (impelled by William Shatner), 1969's *The Maltese Bippy*, and two *Howe* episodes. *The Female Bunch* was advertised with slogans including "Hot Pants— and a Fast Draw! They Treat Their Horses Better Than Their Men!" It was partially shot at the Spahn Ranch, also home at the time to Charlie Manson and company. This grade-Z opus is preceded at the Vortex Room by the very big-budget *Candy* (1968), an abysmal stab at Terry Southern's porn satire whose all-star cast included everyone from Brando and Burton to Ringo Starr, Sugar Ray Robinson, John Huston, and Anita Pallenberg. *Thurs/18, 9 p.m., \$5, Vortex Room, 1082 Howard, SF; www.myspace.com/thevortexroom. (Harvey) SFBG*



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first run venues

The following is contact information for Bay Area first-run theaters. Please go to sfbg.com for a complete list of showtimes.

Balboa 38th Ave/Balboa. 221-8184, www.balboamovies.com.

Bridge Geary/Blake. 267-4893.

Century Plaza Noor off El Camino, South SF. (650) 742-9200.

Century 20 Junipero Serra/John Daly, Daly

City. (650) 994-7469.

Clay Fillmore/Clay. 267-4893.

Embarcadero Center Cinema 1 Embarcadero Center, promenade level. 267-4893.

Empire West Portal/Vicente. 661-2539.

Four Star Clement/23rd Ave. 666-3488.

Kabuki Cinema Post/Fillmore. 929-4650.

Lumiere California/Polk. 267-4893.

Marina Theatre 2149 Chestnut. www.lntsf.com/marina_theatre

Metreon Fourth St/Mission. 1-800-FANDANGO.

Metro Union/Webster. 931-1685.

1000 Van Ness 1000 Van Ness. 1-800-231-3307.

Opera Plaza Van Ness/Golden Gate. 267-4893.

Presidio 2340 Chestnut. 776-2388.

SF Centre Mission between Fourth and Fifth sts. 538-8422.

Stonestown 19th Ave/Winston. 221-8182.

Vogue Sacramento/Presidio. 221-8183.

OAKLAND

Grand Lake 3200 Grand, Oakl. (510) 452-3556.

Jack London Stadium 100 Washington, Jack London Square, Oakl. (510) 433-1320.

Parkway 1834 Park, Oakl. (510) 814-2400.

Piedmont Piedmont/41st St, Oakl. (510) 464-5980.

BERKELEY AREA

Albany 1115 Solano, Albany. (510) 464-5980.

AMC Bay Street 16 5614 Shellmound, Emeryville. (510) 457-4262.

California Kittredge/Shattuck, Berk. (510) 464-5980.

Cerrito 10070 San Pablo, El Cerrito. (510) 972-9102.

Emery Bay 6330 Christie, Emeryville. (510) 420-0107.

Oaks 1875 Solano, Berk. (510) 526-1836.

Orinda 4 Orinda Theater Square, Orinda. (510) 254-9060.

Rialto Cinemas Elmwood 2966 College Ave. at Ashby, Berk. (510) 433-9730.

Shattuck Cinemas 2230 Shattuck, Berk. (510) 464-5980.

UA Berkeley 2274 Shattuck, Berk. (510) 843-1487. **afbc**

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Schedules are for Wed/17-Tues/23 except where noted. Director and year are given when available. Double features are marked with a +. All times are p.m. unless otherwise specified.

ARTISTS' TELEVISION ACCESS 992 Valencia, SF; www.ataste.org. \$6. "Other Cinema:" "Extreme Animation," works by Paper Rad, Nate Boyce, Martha Colburn, and more, Sat, 8:30.

BERKELEY FELLOWSHIP OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 1924 Cedar, Berk; (510) 841-4824. **Awakening from Sorrow: Buenos Aires 1997** (Eppelstein and Knoop, 2009), Fri, 7.

CAPÉ OF THE DEAD 3208 Grand, Oakl; (510) 931-7945, Free. "Independent Filmmakers Screening Nite," Wed, 6:30.

CASTRO 429 Castro, SF; (415) 621-6120. www.castrotheatre.com. \$7.50-10. **Alice in Wonderland** (Burton, 2010), through April 1, 4, 7, 9:45.

CENTER OF LIGHT 2944 76th Ave, Oakl; (510) 207-6593, Free. **The Age of Stupid** (Armstrong, 2009), Fri, 7:30.

CHRISTOPHER B. SMITH RAFAEL FILM CENTER 1114 Fourth St, San Rafael; (415) 454-1222. www.cafilm.org. \$6.50-10. **An Education** (Scherfig, 2009), call for dates and times.

The Art of the Steal (Argott, 2009), call for dates and times. **The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers** (Ehrlich and Goldsmith, 2009), call for dates and times.

North Face (Stölz, 2008), call for dates and times. **A Prophet** (Audiard, 2009), call for dates and times.

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (Oplev, 2009), March 19-25, call for times. **Live!** (Guttenberg, 2007), with director Bill Guttenberg in person, Sun, 7.

FOUR STAR 2200 Clement, SF; www.thrillville.net. \$10. **Thrillville** (Popko and West, 2003) and **Retardhead** (Popko and West, 2008), Thurs, 7:30. Local cult classics with filmmakers and cast in person, plus live music by Meshugga Beach Party.

GOETHE-INSTITUT 530 Bush, SF; www.goethe.de/sanfrancisco. \$7. "New German Cinema:" **Parkour** (Rensing, 2009), Wed, 6:30.

HUMANIST HALL 390 27th St, Oakl; www.humanisthall.org. \$5. **The Secret of Oz**, Wed, 7:30.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE 57 Post, SF; (415) 393-0100. rsvp@milibrary.org. \$10. "CinemaLit Film Series: Star Power, A Month of Meryl Streep:" **A Cry in the Dark** (Schepisi, 1988), Fri, 6.

ODDBALL FILMS 275 Capp, SF; (415) 558-8117. info@oddballfilm.com. \$10. "India Films: The Naked Eye," Fri, 10. "Under the Sea: Maritime Movies from the Archives," Sat, 10.

PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE 2575 Bancroft, Berk; (510) 642-5249. www.bampfa.berkeley.edu. \$5.50-9.50. "Film 50: History of Cinema:" **Last Year at Marienbad** (Resnais, 1961), Wed, 3.

"Joseph Losey: Pictures of Provocation:" **The Servant** (1963), Sun, 5. **These Are the Damned** (1965), Sun, 7:20. San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival, Wed-Sat. See film listings for schedule.

PARAMOUNT 2025 Broadway, Oakl; 1-800-745-3000. www.oobs.org. \$20-65. "The Mighty Wurlitzer: Music at the Movies:" **The General** (Keaton and Bruckman, 1926), Fri, 8; Sun, 2.

PIEDMONT 4186 Piedmont, Oakl; (510) 464-5980. \$5-8. "Cult Classics Attack 5:" **The Neverending Story** (Petersen, 1984), Fri-Sat, midnight; Sun, 10am.

PLAYHOUSE THEATER 40 Main, Tiburon; www.tiburonfilmfestival.com. "Tiburon International Film Festival," March 18-26. Check web site for program information.

RED POPPY ART HOUSE 2698 Folsom, SF; www.redpoppyarthouse.org. \$8-12. **Marina of the Zabbaleen: Portrait of a Child Recycler** (Wassef, 2008), Sun, 7.

RED VIC 1727 Haight, SF; (415) 668-3994. \$6-10. **Night of Lust** (Bénazéraf, 1963), Wed-Thurs, 7:15, 9:30 (also Wed, 2). **Fantastic Mr. Fox** (Anderson, 2009), Fri-Mon, 7:15, 9:15 (also Sat-Sun, 2, 4).

The Road (Hillcoat, 2009), March 23-25, 7, 9:20 (also March 24, 2).

ROXIE 3117 and 3125 16th St, SF; (415) 863-1087. www.roxie.com. \$5-9.75. Closed for renovation until April 1.

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS 701 Mission, SF; (415) 978-2787. www.ybca.org. \$6-8. "Human Rights and Film:" **Petition** (Zhao, 2009), Thurs, 7:30. "2009 British Television Advertising Award Winners," Sat-Sun, 2, 4 (also Sat, 6, 8). **afbc**

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ABANDONMENT OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

The registrant listed below has abandoned the use of the fictitious business name **Second Derivative Research, LLC**, 1630 Union St Suite 2, San Francisco, CA 94123. The fictitious business name was filed in the County of San Francisco under File # A-0320363-00 on: 6/4/2009. NAME AND ADDRESS OF REGISTRANTS (as shown on previous statement): Second Derivative Research, LLC, 1630 Union St Suite 2, San Francisco, CA 94123. This business was conducted by limited liability company. Signed Richard A. Eckert, Managing Principal. Dated: March 4, 2010, Florence Sui, Deputy County Clerk. #133048. March 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2010

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-034887. The following person is doing business as **MODAMORGHANA**, 2550 Mabel St Berkeley, CA 94702. Morghan Hallinan, 2550 Mabel St Berkeley, CA 94702. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/1/10. Signed Morghan Hallinan. This statement was filed with the County Clerk the County of Alameda, CA by Patrick O'Connell on February 18, 2010. **#113046, March 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 435735. The following person is doing business as **Jest Jewels Inc.** 1791 4th St Berkeley, CA 94710. Jest Jewels, 1869 Union St San Francisco, CA 94123. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date January 1994. Signed Eleanor Carpenter. This statement was filed with the County Clerk the County of Alameda, CA by Patrick O'Connell on March 9, 2010. **#113054, March 17, 24, 31 and April 7, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325342-00 The following person is doing business as **PROP & BOPP**, 870 Market Street #957, San Francisco, CA 94102. Arthur C. Lipton, 260 King Street #721, San Francisco, CA 94107. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date February 1, 2010. Signed Arthur C. Lipton. This statement was filed by Michael Jaldon on February 2, 2010. **#35044, Publication Dates: March 10, 17, 24, 31, 2010.**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325640-00 The following person is doing business as **Nelly Reyes Immigration Consultant**, 564 Market St Suite 715E San Francisco, CA 94104. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 11/1/1991. Signed Nelly Reyes-Rosenberg. This statement was filed by Florence Siu on February 17, 2010. **#113051, March 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325657-00 The following person is doing business as **BAY AUTOMOTIVE**, 1650 Davidson Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94124. Gary P. Vo, 3701 Woodland Place, Richmond, CA 94806. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date February 17, 2010. Signed Gary P. Vo. This statement was filed by Karen J. Hong Yee on February 17, 2010. **#113051, March 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325712-00 The following person is doing business as **QUICKFOX EVENTS**, 124 Leese St., San Francisco, CA 94111. Sean Monsarrat, 121 Leese St., San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 02/18/10. Signed Sean Monsarrat. This statement was filed by Nory Hanson on February 19, 2010. **#35318, March 3, 10, 17 & 24, 2010.**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0326704-00 The following person is doing business as **Guerrero Gallery**, 2700 19th St San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/19/10. Signed Andres Guerrero. This statement was filed by Marielene L. Argente on February 19, 2010. **#113042, February 24, March 3, 10 and 17, 2010.**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325914-00 The following person is doing business as **CAREEKA.COM**, 4288 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94110. Wilson Li, 4258 Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date Not Applicable. Signed Wilson Li. This statement was filed by Florence Siu on February 26, 2010. **#35045, Publication Dates: March 3, 10, 17, 24, 2010.**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325951-00 The following person is doing business as **PASION RESTAURANT**, 737 Irving Street, San Francisco, CA 94122. Fresca Restaurants Inc., 3545 24th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date Not Applicable. Signed Resco Restaurants Inc., Julio Calvo-Perez. This statement was filed by Florence Siu on February 26, 2010. **#35046, Publication Dates: March 3, 10, 17, 24, 2010.**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0325993-00 The following person is doing business as **Phoenix Equine**, 950 Rhode Island St San Francisco, CA 94107. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 3/1/10. Signed Jill Hamilton. This statement was filed by Florence Siu on March 1, 2010. **#113047, March 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0326181-00 The following person is doing business as **All Better Repairs**, 1350 Howard St San Francisco, CA 94103. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 3/8/10. Signed Christopher Mulhauser. This statement was filed by Marielene L. Argente on March 8, 2010. **#113065, March 17, 24, 31 and April 7, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0326191-00 The following person is doing business as **The Urban Chair**, 3650 24th St San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by limited liability company. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Carla I. Beyer. This statement was filed by Marielene L. Argente on March 8, 2010. **#113062, March 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0326203-00 The following person is doing business as **Maid of Honor**, 822 4th Vallejo St San Francisco, CA 94133. This business is conducted by a general partnership. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/8/10. Signed Vincent Yuen. This statement was filed by Florence Siu on March 8, 2010. **#113063, March 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0326288-00 The following person is doing business as **The Human Elements**, 1218 48th Ave San Francisco, CA 94122. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 3/11/10. Signed Rick A. Erickson. This statement was filed by Magdalena Zevallos on March 11, 2010. **#113057, March 17, 24, 31 and April 7, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0326304-00 The following person is doing business as **Studio Moon**, 669 Rhode Island St San Francisco, CA 94107. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 1/1/2001. Signed Tracy E. Moon. This statement was filed by Nory Hanson on March 12, 2010. **#113058, March 17, 24, 31 and April 7, 2010**

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE Date of Filing Application: **March 11, 2010**. To Whom It May Concern: The name of the applicant is: **Konico Inc.** The applicant listed above is applying to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to sell alcoholic beverages at: 1469 18th St, San Francisco, CA 94107-2801. Type of License Applied for: **47-ON-SALE GENERAL EATING PLACE.** Publication dates: **March 17, 2010** **L#113056**

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO SELL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES Date of Filing Application: **March 3, 2010**. To Whom It May Concern: The name of the applicant is: **Betty D Hale Inc.** The applicant listed above is applying to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to sell alcoholic beverages at: 3243 Pierce St, San Francisco, CA 94123-2705. Type of License Applied for: **48-ON-SALE GENERAL PUBLIC PREMISES.** Publication dates: **March 10, 17, and 24 2010** **L#113049**

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO SELL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES Date of Filing Application: **March 4, 2010**. To Whom It May Concern: The name of the applicant is: **LA ESQUINA L-PSHIP.** The applicant listed above is applying to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to sell alcoholic beverages at: 317 Connecticut, San Francisco, CA 94107-2828. Type of License Applied for: **42-ON-SALE BEER AND WINE - EATING PLACE.** Publication dates: **March 10, 17, and 24, 2010** **L#113050**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: CNC-10-546631. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION OF Frederick Louie for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Frederick Louie** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: **Frederick Louie** Proposed Name: **Frederick Wai Yu Louie**. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: May 4, 2010. Time: 9:00 AM room # 218. Signed by James J McBride, Presiding Judge on February 22, 2010. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on February 25, 2010 by Param Natt, Deputy Clerk. Publication dates: **March 10, 17, 24, 31, and April 7, 2010.** **L#113044**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: CNC-10-546640. SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, 575 Polk St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION OF Margaret Elizabeth Kaufman for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Margaret Elizabeth Kaufman** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: **Margaret Elizabeth Kaufman** Proposed Name: **Margaret Fote Kaufman**. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: May 4, 2010. Time: 9:00 AM room # 218. Signed by James J McBride, Presiding Judge on February 25, 2010. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on February 25, 2010 by Param Natt, Deputy Clerk. Publication dates: **March 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2010.** **L#113046**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: CNC-10-546641. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION Holly Sanders for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Holly Sanders** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: **Holly Sanders** Proposed Name: **Erin Sanders**. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: May 25, 2010. Time: 9:00 AM room # 218. Signed by James J McBride, Presiding Judge on March 12, 2010. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on March 12, 2010 by Param Natt, Deputy Clerk. Publication dates: **March 17, 24, 31 and April 7, 2010.** **L#113059**

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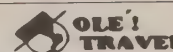
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MARCH 17-23

ARIES

March 21-April 19

Setting your priorities with your ego will put you on a path that will bring you no joy. Slow down and reassess your motives before it's too late to change direction and you're stuck with damage control.

TAURUS

April 20-May 20

You are able to start something meaningful this week, so check in with yourself to see what feels most deserving of your awesomeness. Don't waste energy seeking approval.

GEMINI

May 21-June 21

Just because you feel sad doesn't mean you have to tear things up. Make creative changes that allow more room for what you want.

CANCER

June 22-July 22

Before you do anything rash, take a breather. This week's theme is motive, and you better check yours. Don't convince others about where you're coming from — embody it.

LEO

July 23-Aug. 22

If everything has to go your way for you to feel fabulous, you are working off a shallow foundation. Develop tools for nurturing yourself even when you hit a rough patch.

VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sept. 22

Don't pathologize yourself. Feeling bad is OK when you are experiencing crappy times, just like feeling excellent is the right response to the good stuff. Experience life without fearing your own head.

By Jessica Lanyadoo

Jessica Lanyadoo has been a psychic dreamer for 15 years. Check out her Web site at www.lovelanyadoo.com or contact her for an astrology or intuitive reading at (415) 336-8354 or dreamyastrology@gmail.com.

LIBRA

Sept. 23-Oct. 22

Handle yourself with a little restraint or you'll lose yourself in others. If you set wise boundaries with the folks you care most about, you can sustain the good vibes you crave.

SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

Resist the temptation to barrel forward when you have no clue about what you're doing. You're likely to create more problems than you solve by pushing ahead. Cool it till you have a clearer game plan.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You can be such a visionary when you get out of your own way. Don't focus on nasty "what ifs." Instead, focus on what you hope to create.

CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

You are going to get through this, Cappy. You just need to stay focused on what's in front of you rather than on all the baggage you brought with you. Let go of your rusty old ways this week and trust in your own strength.

AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

You're on the edge of a hecka big change and you need a breather, pal. Your best medicine right now is a time out, toddler style. Let your inner baby have a meltdown, then put her to sleep. When she wakes up, you'll be ready for anything.

PISCES

Feb. 19-March 20

Be willing to make some choices and take some risks. The time for procrastination has come and gone. Take responsibility for how your state of mind affects the people around you. **SFBG**

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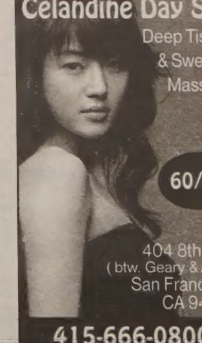
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Ti-ming

By Andrea Nemerson

andrea@mail.altsexcolumn.com

Dear Andrea:

My boyfriend and I have been dating for three years and we have always had the same issue. It takes a long time for him to come, whether I am performing oral sex or we are having anal sex. We've talked about it, and I am always trying to understand what I can do to make him come. Since it takes so long, he always ends up finishing off himself. I would like to be the one who makes him come when I give him a blow job, but I don't know what to do. Please help.

Love,
Spectator

Dear Tator:

I understand that you want to be the one who "makes" him come. And if it's blow-job-to-ejaculation you're after and not getting, I also understand that there could be some considerable loss of sensation/pay-off/money shot for you, too. And I understand that we (that would be humans) often enjoy the giddy sense of accomplishment and mastery we get from creating and controlling an enjoyable experience for our partners. I don't imagine, though, that this is the first time I have had to sing this old song to one of my correspondents: You really *can't* always get what you want. However ...

There may be something going on with your boyfriend physically or emotionally that can be addressed, but I actually kind of doubt it. I'd imagine that he would have come out with it by now or you would have sussed it out yourself. I'm going to assume that all of the "a little harder/softer/shallower/deeper/faster/slower/wetter/drier/firmer/softer/did I miss any? issues have already been addressed. Is he on any medication that could cause the unfortunately-named "retarded ejaculation?" One kind of hopes so, since a medication change can just wave the problem away like a magic wand.

If no such insta-fix is available, what are the quick-ish fixes, and what are the more gradual, therapy-based approaches, and are any of them likely to work? The answer is a resounding "maybe!" All I can do is throw suggestions at the wall and see what sticks.

It's somewhat painful to admit that one's partner is insufficiently aroused, but as long as you take care not to end that sentence with "by me" you should be able to work through this without too much ego-bruising. He does need something extra, so figure out together if there's a fantasy component missing. Or maybe he has accustomed himself to some form of arousal or fantasy that you can't reasonably imitate for him, and you will need to work together to replace that with something you *can* supply.

Maybe he has control issues — what often looks, to the frustrated partner, like an inability to give turns out to be, on closer inspection, an inability to *take*. Or maybe he just wants a hand job? That wasn't on your list of things that aren't working, so ... ? And finally, have you tried just doing what you're doing, then turning it over to him as though for the big finish, and then, on his signal, jumping back in? That isn't cheating. That's timing.

Love,
Andrea

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